

ALPHA

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No 7 Mar/Apr 1980

MYSTERIES OF MIND & MATTER

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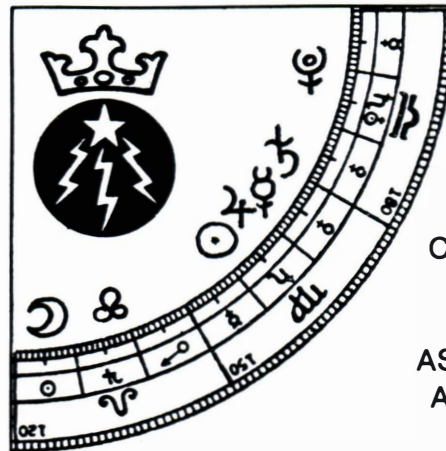
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Mar/Apr 1980

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ALPHA is an independent magazine covering the paranormal and other aspects of reality as yet excluded from acceptance by orthodox science.

The views, claims and opinions expressed by contributors and advertisers are not necessarily shared or accepted by the editors and publishers of the magazine.

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A glimpse of the future

THIS ISSUE marks our anniversary — the first, we hope, of many more to come. It is a good time to take a backward glance at what we have achieved and, much more importantly, to tell you what is in store for the future, although even we do not pretend to have foreseen all that's round the corner. We'll stick to our plans.

First, a word of thanks to you, our readers. Without your support, it goes without saying, there would be no magazine. We set out to supply you with a publication that we felt was badly needed and, to judge from the response we have received, you agree. *Alpha* is not doctrinaire, but open minded. We try to review the evidence without fear or favour. If we have appeared hard on some claims and theories, we assure you it is in the interests of the truth. Equally, if fresh evidence emerges to lead us to revise our conclusions, we are happy to do so. We have no axe to grind.

Your encouragement and constructive criticism have helped to steer us in the right direction. Keep writing to us during our second year of publication, not just to make us aware of your opinions but to open up the dialogue with your fellow readers. Along with other sections of the magazine, we would like to see the letters page grow.

No one has all the answers and the scope for discussion, disagreement and debate is enormous. If you do feel strongly about anything that has been covered in *Alpha* or about any relevant subject, don't keep it to yourself. Let us all know.

Don't think this is just a polite gesture to you all. Far from it. It is a genuine invitation to everyone who cares about the truth to contribute their ideas and expand our collective consciousness. We have only just begun to scratch the surface and all informed contributions are important.

You don't have to look very far to see that there is great pressure for change building up within society. Many believe we are on the threshold of a new era, which will see a major revision of values and thinking at the deepest level. This is partly borne out by the reawakened interest in ancient teachings and partly by the wide-spread quest for self-discovery.

Unlike the scientific, technological revolution, which was remote from most people, the major changes, according to the new age theorists, are occurring in the realm of consciousness and involve a reappraisal of human potential and the nature of things. We are all free to take part in the processes of experimentation, inquiry and investigation.

Now for the changes we are making.

You will have seen that we've altered the sub-title of the magazine to *Mysteries of Mind and Matter*. We did so after much thought because we want to be free to explore subjects closely related to the paranormal.

Editorially, we intend to continue to improve the magazine. We are delighted to announce that we are expanding our editorial team with the addition of a number of extremely able and

knowledgeable contributing editors.

Starting next issue, the book review section will be edited by Hilary Evans, whose thoughtful and penetrating reviews have already been featured in the magazine. An author himself, with a number of books to his credit, including an introduction to the UFO enigma, he brings his own unique fund of knowledge to *Alpha*. He is an active member of the Society for Psychical Research, and, together with his wife, runs the Mary Evans Picture Library. Among other claims to fame, the library boasts the most extensive photographic collection of people, places and phenomena connected with the worlds of Spiritualism, the occult and the paranormal.

We are very conscious that many of you have specific interests. So, beginning with this issue, we shall be introducing a number of regular columns summarising recent important developments in a number of fields. The first column to appear is Parapsychology, edited by Roy Stemman, who, as well as being *Alpha's* co-editor, has written several books on the paranormal. Others soon to be launched include *Earth Mysteries*, under the editorship of Paul Devereux, a tireless researcher, writer and lecturer who has done as much as anyone to bring common sense, clear and creative thinking to bear on the subject of ley lines and related mysteries. As many will know, he is the editor of the *Ley Hunter*.

Another writer steeped in his subject is Bob Rickard, editor of *Fortean Times* and author of several books. He will be contributing a column on the perennial mystery of those weird and wonderful phenomena that disturb our complacent view of reality.

You will be able to keep track of the latest sightings and developments in the field of ufology through a new column edited by Lionel Beer, a council member of the British UFO Research Association, who recently ran the first adult-education course on the subject at Morley College, London, and has written extensively on UFOs.

These three columns will be phased in over coming issues, as will a new section on health and healing. We shall also continue to run articles by and about leading figures, developments and research findings in all the areas we've covered so far.

We aim to give, as far as possible, a comprehensive survey of what's going on in the various fields of parapsychology, parascience, and the other "para" disciplines that are fast establishing themselves on the pioneering fringe of science and thought. Who knows, we might even be the first magazine to have a parapolitics column!

We won't get too involved with labels, though. *Alpha* will continue to cover those theories, ideas and phenomena that transcend a limited, materialistic view of life.

Alpha will have some surprises in store for you in coming issues. That's one prediction we'll confidently make.

David Harvey & Roy Stemman

NEWS

Dead man clears killer

DO DEAD men tell tales? A Brazilian judge has decided they do, after hearing an extraordinary murder case. Ironically, it all began when two 16-year-old friends — Jose Nunes and Mauricio Henrique — discussed mysteries that could not be explained.

Mauricio had claimed that it was possible to wound or kill someone just by firing a gun at that person's reflection. Jose, in whose home

they had met, scoffed at the idea and to prove it was nonsense he went to fetch his father's gun.

He put a single bullet in the gun and aimed at Mauricio's reflection. But he missed, and the bullet ricocheted off a marble window sill, striking the friend in the chest and killing him. Jose raised the alarm immediately.

The police, however, did not believe the young man's story. They decided it was possible that the two friends had had a bitter argument that ended in murder. So Jose went on trial.

Jose's mother, Maria, decided on an unusual course of action to prove her son's innocence. She contacted Brazil's top medium, Francisco Candido Xavier, who is apparently able to let the dead control his hand and write messages.

Xavier made contact with Mauricio and he appeared in court to read the dead man's statement. The message said: "Jose was not to blame. I had told him that nonsense about the mirror, he fired at my reflection and I was killed as a result of a foolish game.

My friend Jose is innocent."

The samples of Mauricio's handwriting were produced so that the court could compare them with the writing produced by Xavier. They matched. The question that remained, however, was whether such evidence could be accepted in a court of law.

Judge Orimar de Bastos gave the answer. "I am not a Spiritualist," he said. "But I have to give credibility to this message even though it is unprecedented for the victim, after his death, to give an account of his death.

"Mr Xavier is highly regarded for his honesty and integrity and he would not make up anything like this. Mauricio's message backs up what Jose has told us. Jose Nunes is not guilty." (Source: *Sunday Express*, March 2, 1980).

It is not the first time Xavier's automatic writing has featured in a court case. Over 30 years ago he was taken to court by the widow and the publishers of Humberto de Campos, one of Brazil's greatest writers and critics, after he had produced a number of books which were said to have been dictated by de Campos. The court was asked to decide whether it was or was not the famous writer who had originated the scripts from beyond the grave. There were lengthy proceedings but the case was eventually dismissed "for lack of legal basis."

Xavier's books have sold hundreds of thousands of copies but he accepts no royalties, nor will he accept payment for his other work as a medium. Xavier was born 70 years ago, never went to primary school and is only half literate, yet he has produced around 100 books.

BUFORA changes

BUFORA now has a new chairman, Mr Leslie Bayer, and a new Hon. Treasurer, Mr Wilf Grunau. Both are experienced businessmen with a long-standing interest in ufology. Lionel Beer is remaining a BUFORA Council member without specific office.

Following last year's successful international conference, BUFORA will be staging a similar event in the early summer of 1980 at the same venue: the Mount Pleasant Hotel, Hyde Park. Last year's conference attracted 400 people from 21 countries.

In the meantime, BUFORA's lecture series adds an international flavour with guest speaker Dr Alain Esterle, head of GEPAN, (the French UFO investigative body based at the National Space Centre, Toulouse), the 12th April at the Kensington Central Library.

UFO reporting

ONE OF the most unpredictable aspects of UFO sightings is how they will be reported by the press. Reporters often make little effort to disguise their prejudice, especially when it is cynically dismissive. But some times they get on with the job of open-minded reporting.

The *Sunday Express* ran a piece on December 16 about a sighting near the River Exe estuary in Exmouth, Devon. A mother and her 12-year-old son, both saw a cigar-shaped object with brilliant flashing lights for several minutes.

The accounts of the mother and her son were presented straight and in some detail. In all, about six hundred words were devoted to the story which was tied in with another recent sighting in the area. Again, there was a verbatim account from the person involved. In these cases, the reporter let the eye-witnesses speak for themselves.

If this sort of reporting carries on, the public is going to start believing in the darn things.

Sino-American tie-up

IN ISSUE 5, we carried a piece about the recent Californian earthquakes and the suggestion that animals may provide an early warning through their unusual and disturbed behaviour. As part of an effort to pool knowledge on the subject, American seismologists will be taking a closer look at this method of quake prediction, traditionally valued in China, as well as comparing notes with the Chinese on other aspects of earthquake warning systems.

Alpha conference

LATER ON in the year, possibly during September, Alpha plans to stage a one-day conference on the subject of UFOs. There will be a star-studded list of speakers who will put the subject in perspective. Further details will be announced in later issues.

Olympia festival

THIS YEAR Alpha will again be taking a stand at the Festival for Body, Mind and Spirit which takes place between June 21 and 29. So come along and see us.

Scepticism down-under

CHARLES Osborne, physics lecturer at Caulfield Institute of Technology, Victoria, Australia, finds it hard to believe what he has seen. But, according to the *Age*, a leading Australian paper, the physicist has put his scepticism to the test.

Since 1977 he has carried out a battery of experiments with children who claimed to be capable of ESP, psychokinesis and other paranormal feats. What worries him is that they seem to be genuine in many cases.

"I've seen the phenomena," he is quoted as saying. "The controls are as tight as I can get them. But my belief system is against it — my science training tells me that ESP is impossible, absurd, even though my experiments suggest it is happening . . . the most I can do is stay open-minded enough to keep testing."

His reluctance to accept the evidence at face value arises from

his familiarity with the many hoaxes and deceptions with which the history of psychic research is littered. That has led him to be ultra-cautious himself.

Initially, the current programme of research was sparked off by the publicity surrounding Geller. Osborne found, in Geller's wake, that many children had picked up his metal bending abilities. He has tested 800 children, and seen demonstrations that he was unable to fault. Metal bending as "the bane of my life", he complains.

Monstrous story

WHAT would Osborne have made of the account of Leo and Patricia George, whose picnic in the Blue Mountains, West of Sydney was somewhat spoiled by their close encounter with a Yowie, Australia's equivalent of the Yeti?

The couple were looking for a nice, quiet picnic spot when they came upon the mutilated carcass of a kangaroo. More disturbing, though, was the sight of a large, shaggy creature "at least ten feet tall" shambling off forty feet from them. What shook them even more was that the earlier picnicker turned to stare at them before continuing on its way.

Aborigine folk lore mentions the Yowie, which translates as "great hairy man" and a leading naturalist, Rex Gilroy, who has been tracking down his quarry through legendary accounts now plans to mount a search for the beast. He has found references to more than 3,000 sightings of the Yowie in Australia's eastern mountain districts. (*Sunday Express*, December 1979).

Catching a cold

PSYCHOLOGICAL factors could be at the bottom of the common cold mystery. Attempts to find out why some people are more

susceptible to colds than others have leaned heavily on biochemical explanations: the level of antibodies left from previous infections was thought to be the explanation.

Dr Richard Totman, a research worker at Lincoln College, Oxford, has come to rather different conclusions following his research programme with 52 volunteers at the Common Cold Research Unit, Salisbury.

He tested for antibodies. But he also assessed his subjects psychologically to find out how much stress they had undergone recently. Their psychological state, rather than the antibody levels, seemed to provide a better pointer to whether or not they were likely to come down with a severe cold. Bad colds are more in the mind than the body, apparently.

Personality tests also showed the extroverts were less likely to suffer severe colds than introverts.

Dr Totman's research was reported in the *New Scientist* in March.

Total recall

THIS February saw the death of a man who challenged the limitations of normal memory with his legendary ability to recall the most abstruse facts about 37 sports. Leslie Welch, better known as the Memory Man, claimed that he was asked over one million questions during his career. And he got all the answers right, he said.

He died at the age of 72 having made his name through the many royal command performances, films and radio shows in which he had appeared.

He went on record as saying, "I'm not a freak. Anyone can do it. It's my belief that everyone is born with a perfect memory. By



"This one could be a real big fella."

the time they are 21, thanks to the invention of pen and paper, they are only using a fifth of it. The other four-fifths have gone dormant, like a muscle not being used."

New light on meditation

DESPITE the substantial claims made for the beneficial effects of meditation, it is too soon to make categorical claims for its value as a therapy. But, says Dr Michael West of Kent University's social psychology research unit, in the British Journal of Psychiatry, there are grounds for "cautious optimism".

A great deal more research needs to be done, he argues, before the effects of meditation can be clearly separated from the "effects of treating (no matter what the treatment)".

Grounds for optimism lie, he suggests, in the evidence that indicates that meditation provides a means of achieving increased relaxation and decreased anxiety. The risk is that with "the advent of all 'wonder cures' like meditation and biofeedback, initial enthusiasm can produce a plethora of hopes, claims and expectations, which later are washed away by the results of careful research." Nevertheless, the case for making a close study of the comparative benefits of meditation and other therapies is strong in his view.

Unifying theme

ONE MEASURE of the mounting interest in healing is the extent to which conferences succeed in drawing enthusiastic audiences. "Unity in Healing 1980", staged by Region 2 of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers attracted over 150 people from this country and abroad, including a couple of young doctors from Yugoslavia. About half the audience were members of the NFSH, the remainder interested outsiders.

The crowded weekend schedule presented a range of ideas and

views on healing that clearly showed that there was no simple answer to the question, What is healing? It is many things, from the esoteric science expounded by Brenda Selby Johnson and the ancient art of Yoga, summarised by Anne Holdsworth, to the practice of medicine.

It was Dr Ian Pearce, healer and recently retired Norfolk GP, who brought the breadth of his own knowledge to bear on this issue when he pointed out that the means vary but the end, healing, is the same. Where he differs from his more orthodox medical colleagues is in his conviction that Western medicine stops short. "We are in an era when we regard healing on the physical level only. But physical symptoms are the consequences of inner causes." Those inner causes modern medicine ignores, which is why, he suggests, spiritual healing is the natural complement, although he didn't like the adjective 'spiritual'.

That something else is needed to bolster up the sagging health care currently provided was underlined by Don Copland, healer and organiser of the weekend, who catalogued the extensive ills, from alcoholism to depression, that plague the population.

What all the speakers had in common was a belief in the spiritual dimension of man: the missing element from medicine's biochemical model of man. Johann Quanier, editor of New Humanity Journal, took things one step further. If we are to put the world to rights, no progress will be made until man's true nature is recognised and policies at the political level reflect this understanding, he argued.

Clearly, one way in which the general public's awareness of a non-material dimension can be stimulated is through healing. Healer Rose Dawson was able to report her success in launching healing to the local community. Following public meetings, an initial flurry of publicity and some remarkable cures led to both local press and radio taking a deeper interest.

Britain's new role

MANY FORECASTERS believe we are in for a bumpy ride during the eighties. The contributors to FUTURE TENSE, which we have just published, agree. But, unlike some gloomier predictions, it sees a light at the end of the tunnel and a major, and perhaps unsuspected, role for Britain as a spiritual lighthouse for the rest of the world.

The report is unusual for several reasons, not least for the way in which it came to be compiled.

The man who thought up the project and was responsible for carrying out the research is Francis Kinsman. As a professional forecaster in the world of business and economic affairs, the future is very much his business. Normally, though, his work involves orthodox methods of prediction.

His own method of forecasting, TAROT standing for Trend Analysis for Relative Opinion Testing, is a variant of the well-established Delphi forecasting method developed by the Rand Corporation in the United States.



Francis Kinsman, surprised by the results of FUTURE TENSE.

TAROT involves interviewing a number of experts in depth, collating their views into a series of statements and feeding them back to them for comment. The object is to arrive at a consensus with which all the experts concur, even though they may individually not have predicted a given development.

"It became obvious that something was going on that was not entirely intellectual," says Kinsman, "People said that they found the interviews stimulating and enjoyable. I started wondering whether the same technique could be applied to astrologers, sensitives and other purely intuitive forecasters."

The next step was to find out. He quizzed fifteen astrologers, numerologists, clairvoyants and sensitives on the outlook for British and world economic, political and social affairs. "I was looking for their intuitive reactions to the questions." The results, as it turned out, were surprising.

"What is particularly interesting is that the consensus we arrived at approximates very closely to the second-most-likely scenario that I had arrived at by conventional forecasting methods."

FUTURE TENSE, a prophetic consensus for the eighties, contains many specific predictions. In particular, it defines Britain's new role in world affairs. Although the economic future is not rosy, Britain will flourish as the pioneering force in a global spiritual renaissance.

FUTURE TENSE also foresees 1982 as a particularly trouble-torn year with the outbreak of a fresh Middle East war and earthquakes and other natural disasters. Does Kinsman see all these events on the horizon himself?

"I do not personally believe all the things they expect. I tend to discount earthquakes in the literal sense and see them as allegorical, symbolising spiritual and intellectual upheavals."

Participants in the project included Don Galloway, Ruth White and Rose Gladden. FUTURE TENSE, £1.50 is available through bookshops and direct from us (see the advertisement on the back cover).

R101: Putting our foot in it . . .

ARCHIE JARMAN, who wrote the excellent feature on the R101 airship tragedy and its psychic aftermath (*Alpha*, No. 6), has asked us to correct a printing error which occurred on Page 13. The airship's longitudinal girders were 732ft long, but the "ft" disappeared during typesetting with the result that the text seems to be claiming that the R101 was built with 732 longitudinal girders. As Archie rightly points out, if such were the case it would never have got off the ground.

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An Open Letter to Alpha

from Stan Gooch, author of "The Paranormal".

PART ONE

First let me congratulate *Alpha* on completing its first year of publication, and add my own belated welcome to those of many others. We have long needed a responsible, independent and critical (though not destructive) journal in this field.

In this first part of the letter I want to propose to you a two-fold public action campaign. This would be directed first against — I regret having to use that word — James "The Amazing" Randi. The title of this section is:

Pay up or shut up

James Randi, who as most people know is a professional conjuror, has never been anything but brutally frank in his opinion of paranormal phenomena. He gives no quarter to those he attacks. He will not mind, therefore, if we give no quarter in return.

Randi boasts openly and frequently that he carries a cheque for \$10,000 with him, which he says he will present to the first person who demonstrates a paranormal event under strictly controlled conditions.

Paranormal psychic healing has been conclusively demonstrated on several occasions, under the supervision of individuals like Dr Bernard Grad (of McGill University), Dr Justa Smith (Human Dimensions Institute, New York) and Drs B. Onetto and Gita Elguin (of the University of Chile). I will come to the details of those experiments in a moment. I propose that we *demand* that Randi divides his \$10,000 among these individuals; or, alternatively, that he apologises publicly to these individuals, and in future specifically excludes psychic healing from his public challenge.

In Grad's first experiment several hundred mice were artificially wounded by medical personnel. Careful measurements and descriptions of these wounds were taken. Then some of these mice were treated by a psychic healer (Oskar Estebany), not by his touching the mice but by his placing his hands against the wire of the individual cage. Other mice were treated by medical students in exactly the same way, while yet others were not treated at all. In this elegant double-blind experiment the personnel who cared for the mice outside the healing sessions were not aware which mice belonged to which group. (Many other details of the experimental design are also important — for example, treatment and care of the mice were in a randomly rotated sequence of ten different rooms to avoid any environmental effect.)

At the end of the three-week experiment the mice treated by Estebany had made significant improvement over both the

group treated by medical students and the group not treated at all. No differences were observed between the mice treated by students and the mice not treated at all.³ In a subsequent large-scale experiment, Grad also showed that Estebany could accelerate all aspects of plant growth by initially "healing" the nutrient solution in which they were planted.⁴

I will not describe in detail the two equally elegant experiments conducted respectively by Justa Smith and by Onetto and Elguin. Smith's (which once again involved Estebany) concerned the "healing" of experimentally denatured pancreatic enzyme in suspended solution.⁶ Onetto and Elguin (using an unnamed psychic healer) injected mice with malignant tumour and demonstrated a significant retardation of tumour growth in the mice treated by the healer as against control groups of mice.¹

In terms of design, execution and statistical analysis these experiments are faultless, and my own endorsement of them (as a former senior research psychologist) is quite superfluous. The point I want to emphasise is that Randi must accept the judgement. He is *not* qualified to question or supervise any of the matters involved. Randi always demands that he supervise any experiment and that he be present when it is conducted.

Would, then, he demand to supervise and be present when Bernard Lovell is operating the Jodrell Bank telescope? And could or would Randi's participation then make any difference to the outcome? Or would the results gain in stature or value by Randi's approval? The idea is absurd. And precisely this *is* the situation we are discussing here. Randi has no standing whatsoever in respect of purely medical experiments, and he must accept that. For he will, quite rightly, not allow anyone other than a conjuror to have any standing in respect of conjuring tricks. (As far as at least some aspects of "metal bending" demonstrations are concerned, incidentally, I would not challenge Randi's right to supervise — for here conjuring and science can overlap, and certainly do when fraud is involved.)

Randi has only one recourse in the experiments I have briefly described. He has to say (but without any qualifications for so doing) that Drs Grad, Smith, Onetto and Elguin are professionally incompetent, or are deliberately engaging in fraud. In either of these events, I hope that these individuals will sue Randi for a great deal more than \$10,000.

So there you are, Randi. "Pay up or shut up." I hope *Alpha* will run that slogan somewhere in every issue until you give us satisfaction. Let none of us ever give Randi

any peace ever again. After all, he has never given us any.

Monitoring the monitors

One of the functions of both the popular and the scientific press is that of monitoring events and reporting these to the general public — in the first instance factually and neutrally, but perhaps also along with informed comment and critique. Some magazines and journals, quite legitimately, restrict themselves to certain fields and kinds of events.

The main question here is, how well or fairly does the scientific press, and the scientific establishment for which it fronts, report events and developments in the paranormal field?

Paranormalists know that the scientific press (a) almost never reports events in the paranormal field and (b) almost never reports fairly the tiny fraction it does take up. But how to demonstrate this — i.e. that we are not just a hysterical group of lunatics whose vociferous protests on this score are in fact inversely proportional to the negligible truths we have to offer? Well, we might start by pointing out that the Royal Society will not *accept* papers on the paranormal. Note that point. The papers are not examined and rejected. They are *ruled out*. I am minded, too, of a remark made to Professor John Taylor when in conversation with Dr Edward Condon, an American physicist in charge of assessing the evidence for UFO sightings in the 60s. Condon said: "Always knew there was nothing in it, even before we started."⁷

There *is* an objective way we can publicly draw attention to the prejudiced situation here.

The idea is that *Alpha* shall monitor which (if any) books on matters connected with the paranormal are reviewed each month by scientific journals and magazines (such as *New Scientist*, *Nature*, *Scientific American*, *Lancet* and so on) and also by the self-styled responsible press (*Times*, *Telegraph*, *Guardian* and so on). *Alpha* would need, for the purposes of this exercise, to obtain the titles of books published each month in our field — but that would be useful information for readers anyway. Should the list prove too long for editorial comfort, then the list could be confined to those books which the editors and advisers of *Alpha* personally considered deserving of review in the public interest.

Occasionally a paranormal text does get reviewed by the scientific and straight press. The task of *Alpha* would then be to consider whether the review was fair (naturally, there is no reason why it should be *favourable*) — or whether and to what extent it involved cheap, underhand or irrelevant comment.

Each year, based on the number of paranormal reviews given or not given, and the style and depth of review, *Alpha* would award a bent spoon to the most undeserving publication "For the Greatest Dis-service to the Future of Mankind: In Recognition of Singular Indifference or Obtuseness, etc., etc."

PART 2

I was delighted to read Matthew Manning's comment (*Alpha* No. 4) that pressure should be brought on psychic researchers to improve standards of experimental design, by awarding a star rating on the basis of how imaginative the research is.

Psychic researchers would no doubt claim that the tedium of their experiments is necessary in order to accommodate scientific standards. This view is indefensible, as I will show in a moment. But even if the tedium were necessary, we would be left with the very undesirable discrepancy between the quicksilver and emotionally-charged quality particularly of spontaneous ESP, and the inert, repetitive experiments which are designed to trap it.

Let us just talk of the design of ESP experiments (and let us leave aside the much larger question of whether the scientific method is in any real sense the correct pathway into the paranormal). As is well known, J.B. Rhine devised the famous Zener cards in the 1930s in order to test telepathy and clairvoyance experimentally. A pack of Zener cards consists of five each of five symbols (a cross, a square, a circle, three wavy lines and a star), making 25 cards in all. A subject, who cannot see the cards, attempts to guess the correct sequence of cards after being shuffled and dealt one by one by the unseen experimenter. The subject is usually required to go through the repeatedly shuffled pack over and over again.

It is now known that a statistically significant proportion of subjects (though not all) produce above chance scores on early runs, but only chance scores in later efforts. Straightaway, one imagines, experimenters would have switched to a design where subjects were tested only once, or at most half a dozen times, and then discarded. (The statistical chance probabilities involved are exactly the same whether one subject is tested a hundred times, or a hundred subjects are tested once each.) But this design seems to have been ignored.

Still more to the point are the following objections. When a subject is guessing his way through the pack, he will be aware, either quite consciously or at least unconsciously, that he has already chosen (say) a cross (say) four times. He will feel that he has "used up" most of his crosses — though in fact not one cross may yet have been dealt by the experimenter. So the subject's psychological freedom is already very severely impaired. There are yet other weaknesses in the design. If a subject chose to guess "cross" on every single occasion, he would guarantee getting a chance score (one in five).

It ought never to be in the power of a

subject (in *any* psychological experiment) to determine the score he will achieve.

All such weaknesses can be avoided, and the whole affair brought suddenly alive, in the following way. A roulette wheel is built, having 25 divisions. These divisions are marked in strict rotation with five sequences of the five symbols. The subject is now given 25 £1 chips. He is allowed to bet one chip on one of the five symbols at each spin of the wheel. If he guesses correctly he is paid odds of 4 to 1, and allowed to keep the total £5. If he guesses wrongly, the £1 chip is forfeit.

This experimental design has everything going for it. The population of symbols being drawn upon is infinite. It can never be "used up" in any sense. And you cannot, in the short term, adopt any guaranteed strategy against the wheel. If you choose to bet the cross on each of the 25 occasions, you can very easily fail to win even once (as any roulette player will tell you). There is, too, the thrill of competing with the wheel. And you can, of course, sit next to it watching it. There is no need for *any* element of secrecy or separation of experimenter and subject.

The design is not prohibitively expensive (and incidentally, a subject can give his money to charity, if he feels that gambling is immoral — as did the husband and wife team who found themselves dreaming the winners of horse races⁵). Chance expects subjects to win £5 each on average, though naturally we would be hoping for a higher average. But even the phenomenal participant who scored 25 out of 25 (and there have been two in the history of Zener cards, one man and one woman²) would win only £125.

So, right on Matthew Manning. Let's mock the experimental establishment with its dullness until we get living experiments for living people.

Kirlian capers

The aspect of *Alpha* which I personally most value is its apparent intention to be firmly critical without being destructive. The uncritical paranormalist is a greater enemy to his own cause than the most hardened sceptic — because it is precisely he who provides the sceptic with his ammunition. In this spirit of constructive criticism, then, let us proceed.

The Kirlian aura phenomenon, which has been hailed and hallooed as positively the greatest breakthrough of recent times in paranormal research, is an extremely suspect development, which is possibly and in fact probably nothing more than an attractive by-product of the photographic apparatus used, having no relation whatsoever to the "subject" of the photograph — be that human hand, leaf or insect.

We know this thanks to the careful work of Professor William Tiller.⁸ More recently, however, Tiller has written: "I am very happy to report that *some* of the conclusions concerning the poor ability of Kirlian as a physiological state monitor *may* have been premature" (my italics).

This statement means that Tiller is having another look at the phenomenon, using a wider-range apparatus. It means, for the moment, nothing more than that. Of course, we all await Tiller's new findings with the greatest interest, and I for one will be delighted if he were now to agree that the Kirlian aura has some genuine meaning. *At present, however, it does not have* — or rather, we do not *know* if it has.

But in any case, there is another very seriously disturbed side to the Kirlian phenomenon. Kirlian pictures of human hands are being analysed by all sorts of people around the world, and on the basis of this analysis recommendations made in such areas as mental health, family relationships and careers to the owner of the hand.

As a professional psychologist with a good deal of experience in these areas, I would in passing warn of the considerable dangers of such analysis and recommendations when made by amateurs, however well-meaning. But let us concentrate on the question of simple foolishness, rather than danger.

A friend of mine has the following background. As a young man beginning his career as a professional physicist, he discovered a flaw in one of Einstein's equations. He wrote the matter up, but just as he was about to publish, an Indian physicist published on the self-same point. Rather disappointed, my friend decided to give up physics, and went into television documentary. Within a few years he was producing successful TV documentaries of the highest order for programmes like *Horizon*. Now he decided to become a free-lance film-maker. Alas, he picked the wrong time to do this, in the early 70s, just when the current world recession was beginning. But he has nevertheless made several innovative documentaries of his own, and now also teaches film-making at university level.

However, on the personal emotional level his life has been far from happy. Though he wished to marry and have children, for instance, this aim has so far eluded him.

On impulse, he presented himself at the Kirlian stand run by Brian Snellgrove at the London Festival for Mind and Body. Here he was told that he had great talents and potential that he had never developed (I wonder what they are?); and that he was emotionally extremely stable and generally contented. To this my friend replied politely that his emotional life was a shambles, and that he had never felt so suicidal as he did at this juncture, and left.

An isolated case?

It so happens that after visiting the Festival, I met a young girl I had not known before, in the company of some friends of mine. She told me that she had had her hand read at the Kirlian stand. They had told her that she had great unrealised potential, ought to have a much better job than she had, and that her parents did not understand her. She felt cheered by this analysis — but without having planned to do so, she now hung around outside the booth, and asked two

young girls who emerged what they had been told. Both of them reported that they apparently had great unrealised potential, should have a much better job, and that their parents did not understand them.

Well, shall I leave it at that? Let me emphasise, in conclusion, that I am in no way accusing individuals like Snellgrove and his assistants of any kind of fraud. But I *am* suggesting at least a certain amount of naivety and as yet unvalidated confidence in this technique. And I herewith challenge

them not just to claim, but to *show* otherwise.

If they can, I will gladly eat the humblest pie obtainable; for I love the truth far more than I love myself, and the truth is always in desperately short supply.

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2. GOOCH, Stan, *The Paranormal*, Wildwood House, London, 1978.
3. GRAD, Bernard *et al*, "The Influence of an Unorthodox Method of Treatment on Wound

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Brian Snellgrove replies, p. 29.

Healing the breach

Greater interest is being shown by doctors and scientists in spiritual healing. Where there was once open hostility, there is now cautious co-operation, as David Harvey reveals.

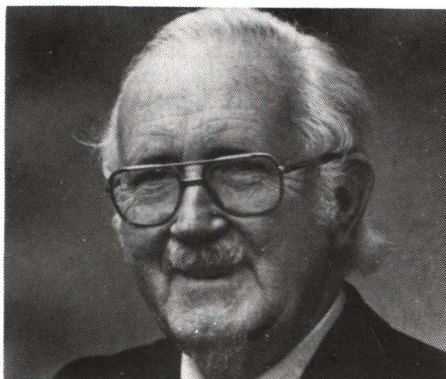
“WOULD you go to a healer?” was the question posed by a Radio 4 programme some time ago. It represented one of the all-too-rare intelligent explorations of a subject that has proved difficult to tame. In this case the programme made a bold and honest attempt at grappling with the issues. They are, after all, profoundly challenging.

How can anyone cure someone by laying hands on the sufferer's body? Even more challenging to the rational mind is the claim that healing can be achieved from a distance, by some telepathic or other means. To the die-hard materialist, it sounds preposterous.

In common with other paranormal happenings, there are several basic questions that immediately arise: Does it work? Can there be a normal explanation if it does? And if not, what can possibly account for its effectiveness? There are many more, but these will do for a start. The Radio 4 programme tackled them head on.

At the focal point of the programme was healer Bruce MacManaway, an articulate, practised speaker on his art who explained in a quiet, undramatic way the often spectacular results healing could have. We heard about healing from the patient's point of view too. A doctor who was successfully treated by MacManaway gave his measured and authoritative account of what had happened. Yes, he had his beliefs about what happens during healing although medically he could not explain it.

Scientist and researcher Max Cade talked about his discoveries and the clues he had detected in studying the healing process, in particular the profound calm that it induces. Feeling a duty to put the other side, the producer made sure that the official establishment line was represented. It amounted to Case not proven. Even where cures and major improvements have occurred, said the British Medical Association, the evidence was not conclusive. A whole range of factors, including wrong diagnosis and



Dr Ian Pearce — change in the air.

spontaneous remission, could account for the changes in a patient's condition. A conclusion, incidentally, the BMA reached in a report 25 years ago and has never revised in the light of new evidence.

After giving both sides of the case a thorough airing, the producer left listeners to make up their own minds. For the open-minded, it was thought-provoking.

Its significance lies in the readiness of the media to take the subject seriously; balanced discussion rather than crude sensationalism, is becoming increasingly evident. What the programme only hinted at is the extent to which healing has become part of national life, although, admittedly, below the visibility threshold of acceptance and respectability.

According to the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, a non-denominational representative organisation, there are probably 8,000 practising healers in the U.K., 2,500 of whom belong to the federation. The NFSH believes that there is an ever-growing number of individuals who have been treated and are familiar with healing, even though they might not talk openly about their experience.

There are indications that the climate of opinion is changing, although healing has yet to break the respectability barrier. The official orthodox line is one inhibiting factor. But even this is softening. In the words of doctor and healer Ian Pearce,

“the barriers are coming tumbling down” although he recognises that “there is still much entrenched prejudice to be broken down before spiritual healers and doctors can work together as a team.” The way is being opened as Harry Edwards, one of the founders of the NFSH, had always hoped it would.

During his lifetime, he saw permission given by the management committees of 1,500 hospitals for members of the NFSH to visit patients in their wards if so requested. But other hoped-for revolutions were not to be realised. Edwards never got the whole-hearted support and endorsement for which he crusaded. Nevertheless, the NFSH kept up the pressure and, in the autumn of 1977, some months after Edwards' death, the General Medical Council relaxed its ruling which said that doctors should have nothing to do with healers professionally. Up until that time, they ran the risk of being struck off if they did. Now they can refer patients to healers providing they retain control of the case: a small, but symbolically significant, move towards the cooperation of which Edwards had dreamed.

Despite this slow thaw in official relations, much must happen before further progress is made. It depends on finding satisfactory answers to the kind of questions posed by “would you go to a healer?” Gradually they are forthcoming.

As several laboratory experiments suggest, something, undeniably, does happen during healing.

One of the earliest investigations to establish whether the phenomenon was fact or fiction was conducted in the U.S.A. Oskar Estebany took part in a double-blind experiment, discussed in detail by Stan Gooch on page 5, that showed he was able to accelerate the healing process. Subsequently, many more investigations have been conducted in different countries which confirm that people, including Matthew Manning, can influence living organisms. What no one yet understands in scientific terms is how.

More is being learnt about the process,

however. Tests run in the U.S.A., U.K. and Japan have come up with results which show that a healer can have a positive, physiological effect on the person being treated. Brain wave measurements and skin resistance monitoring indicate that there is a calming down effect and Max Cade has found a characteristic EEG healing pattern which is picked up and reflected by the patient (see Alpha No. 6). Several researchers agree that an altered state of consciousness is a key ingredient in the process. What no one has been able to do is discover an energy transfer, which many assume must occur. It is a reasonable hypothesis. But is it a form of energy known to science, or is it something else, an elusive vital force that the ancient Chinese called Ch'i and the Yogis knew as Prana? At present, it remains the province of belief and opinion, but not scientific validation.

Professor John Taylor has ruled out electromagnetism and other efforts to identify a natural force have so far drawn a blank. Yet the scientific investigation of the process is not at the end of the road. Kirlian and other types of electrophotographic techniques may, once the fundamental argument about the aura and its significance is resolved, prove a fruitful avenue of research.

In the meantime, there is certainly a gathering interest in the value of healing. Many leading healers have willingly accepted requests to be investigated and questioned by the scientific and medical fraternities. Rose Gladden, for example, has made a number of trips to the United States where she participated in research, as she has done in this country. Many

others have enthusiastically worked with researchers searching for answers. Much has been uncovered, although the underlying principle of healing remains shrouded in mystery.

How many individual scientists and doctors have an interest in healing is impossible to say. Most keep a low profile. But there are various focal points for those who want to pursue that interest.

The Scientific and Medical Network was set up in 1972 to provide a grapevine for those sympathetic to spiritual healing and related matters. Membership is by invitation and anonymity is guaranteed, unless people want their association with the network to be known. Careers and reputations could be at stake because 'spiritual' sympathies are regarded unfavourably in many quarters. It is still necessary, the network feels, to maintain its anonymity policy.

Some members have come out and declared their sympathies. Dr Ian Pearce is one. Dr Alec Forbes, a consultant at Plymouth hospital is another. As the founder and head of the Healing Research Trust, he has long been known as a champion of the use of unorthodox therapies alongside Western medicine. Like Dr Pearce, he is a practising healer, too.

What effect such organisations will have in making healing and other therapies respectable as proper subjects for discussion, study and, of course, application, is too soon to say. But the ground swell of support is undeniably growing. Dr Pearce has found a great deal of enthusiasm among medical students to whom he has lectured. And, recently, a junior branch of the Network was formed

in response to demand. But is the battle being fought at the scientific level alone, or are there beliefs, attitudes and psychological barriers to be overcome?

Dr Pearce believes that if major changes happen, it will be because the rising generation of doctors and scientists are in tune with these ideas. "I very much doubt whether the older generation will change its mind." Be that as it may, the healing message is getting through.

Significantly, one of the Network's taped lecture series that has proved particularly popular is Michael Endacott's specially prepared talk on spiritual healing and its application to cancer treatment. It is as lucid, informative and helpful an introduction to the subject as any available. Endacott is administrator of the NFSH and a healer himself.

Difficult though it may be to accept that the improbable, and apparently miraculous, results of healing, the evidence cannot be ignored. It is not a universal panacea: there are failures, but even then people often attain a state of mind that enables them to come to terms with their suffering. That, in itself, is a miracle for some.

The following articles take a look at the work of a handful of healers working in different ways. They provide an insight into something about which we are going to hear more in the future. Healing can, as one patient says, be a "terrifying and wonderful" experience.

Spiritual healing and its application to cancer, by Michael Endacott, available from Dr Jean Kollerstrom, Scientific and Medical Network, 9 Primrose Gardens, London NW3 4UJ (£3.30 plus 28p p & p).

John Cain: born to heal

Liverpudlian healer John Cain has established a reputation for getting remarkable results. David Harvey takes a closer look at his treatment and the effect it has on some of his patients.

SHEILA SPEIRS' gratitude to John Cain is transparently heart-felt and sincere. As she tells of her release from the crippling pain that has bowed her down for more than twenty years, she searches for words that adequately describe her suffering and miraculous recovery.

It is hard to believe that Sheila, now 50, was anything but the bright, happy and healthy individual she is today. But for 25 years she had endured constant pain focused on her spine. "The doctors were never able to find what was wrong," she says, "but the problem seems to have gone back to the birth of my second child." She had undergone gynaecological operations and there had been complications.

She continued to suffer until, in 1976, the hospital recommended the final resort: a course of spinal injections. Instead of

helping, the first injection made her feel worse and subsequent injections brought on the same violent reactions. Privately, as she learned later, her husband was informed that there was nothing else that could be done and that Sheila had probably 12 months to live. She survived on a diet of drugs supplied on a weekly-renewed prescription.

It was after the last ineffectual injection that Sheila's sister mentioned that John Cain was holding one of his public sessions at Bromborough Civic Hall, Liverpool. There was no other hope, so she agreed to go. Her sister had to half carry her, doubled up with pain, into the hall.

Sheila had hoped she would be first to be seen by John Cain. But she was disappointed. Much to her resentment, everyone else seemed to be getting priority

treatment, although they were suffering from conditions that were at least bearable as far as she could see. Sheila was left to last. In tears of pain, anger and frustration she decided to leave and started out with the aid of her sister. As she reached the foyer, she heard someone tell her to sit down and have a drink of water. She remembers every little event that led up to her healing. A chair was brought. "I was sweating with the pain and someone gave me a dishcloth to wipe my forehead." In her distraction, she remembers seeing women in long flowing dresses. Not realising that there was a dance going on in another part of the hall, she thought it was a drug-induced hallucination.

While she was seated, John Cain came out. He got a frosty welcome. Sheila told him to "go to hell". Despite her lack of co-

operation, he knelt down by her chair and put one hand on her lower back. "I closed my eyes and it felt as if a finger was going into my spine. All the pain went, just like that." In an instant she was transformed and overjoyed. "I wanted to nail the chair to the floor, to show that's where it happened, that's where I was healed." The time, 8.20 pm, and the date 7 October 1977, are stamped on her memory.

Sheila describes the experience as "terrifying and wonderful". Nor was Sheila sure that the cure was permanent. Every time she went up the stairs, she wondered if she would be able to walk down again normally. Finally she became convinced that the change was for good.

A little while after, her husband met Sheila's doctor who asked why no one had been down to collect her prescription. Douglas Speirs told him that his wife no longer needed drugs. Incredulous at first, her doctor later accepted that something extraordinary had happened and that Sheila was cured.

Although hers is an extraordinary case, there are many others who believe they have much to thank John Cain for. Such is the positive response of those who, like Sheila Speirs, have benefitted from Cain's treatment that there is no shortage of grateful patients to spread the word.

You Don't Know John Cain? (see review on books pages), the second book to be published about the healer, gives accounts of 33 patients with stories to tell. Complete recoveries or substantial improvements are recorded from arthritis, diabetes, paralysis, hardening of the arteries, cervical spondilitis and a malignant growth among a list of daunting conditions.

Local Liverpool journalist Pat Sykes has done a thorough job in tracking down many of Cain's past patients for the book to get their own stories and see whether the cures have stuck. Almost without exception, she found ex-patients unstinting in their tributes. "Without John Cain, I wouldn't like to think where I'd be. I owe him my personal happiness and my livelihood", says former arthritis sufferer Bill Dickinson.

"My whole outlook on life has changed through meeting John Cain. I now enjoy helping others more and I realise how much more important it is to have health and emotional happiness. I am also closer to my son than ever before and make time to play with him," says John Tullet, father of the boy who had a malignant growth on his brain.

The personal testimonies flow through the book. Their tenor is the same: enthusiastic and positive. It sounds almost too good to be true.

Not everyone sees an improvement, admits Cain. "But I'd say that 95 per cent of those who come here are helped in some way." After a brief pause, he adds, "Given time, I think I could help the other five per cent." Asked if he finds any particular ailments difficult to treat, he cites tinnitus and shingles. Otherwise, John Cain is nothing if not confident about his healing ability and is prepared to claim that he is



Sheila Speirs — an instantaneous release from 25 years' pain.

one of the most effective healers in the country. The evidence is, indeed, persuasive.

Cain's claim may sound a shade arrogant, but it is only fair to say that it is made in the context of what he has seen practised in the name of healing especially within the Spiritualist movement, which seems to have left him disgusted and disillusioned. While he subscribes to its fundamental beliefs he dissociates himself entirely from organised Spiritualism.

Cain is not afraid to make claims and harsh judgements because he feels justified as one who has established his ability as a healer. He has no patience with those whose claims are not matched by results. On all matters related to healing, his views are forthright and uncompromising.

Healers can be divided according to various criteria. One concerns the subject of money. Predictably, Cain has his own strong opinions about whether or not to charge. He won't. Instead he lives on donations. "If you've got the gift of healing, that intelligence above will look after you; there's no need to charge. That's what I say."

A Liverpoolian by birth, the forty-nine year old healer has always lived and worked on Merseyside. There is certainly a tough side to him and it is not surprising to learn that he used to be an army PT instructor. From an early age he was keen on sport: boxing and judo particularly. He was also a keen dancer and received an offer, which he declined, to turn professional in his teens. Mysteries of mind fascinated him too. Yoga and hypnosis, were subjects to which he devoted close attention. They were to find echoes in his healing work later in his life.

Before he became a full-time healer in 1972, Cain had built up a thriving blacksmith's business employing 30 staff. His annual income was around £20,000 and he drove a Rolls Royce. But instead of developing the business further, he left it to his brother and abandoned his well-heeled life for one of financial uncertainty. All he had to show for his previous success was the fully paid-up mortgage on his house.

Things came to a head when he began to lose interest in his business. "I just had the feeling that all I wanted to do was heal. I had known for a long time that I had healing abilities." He remembers waking

up one morning knowing that he had to resolve his dilemma. Suddenly conscious of his father's presence, the thought "born to heal" came into his mind and there was a feeling of peace. The decision had been made. Cain gave up his blacksmith's business and started healing full time in 1972.

It was not easy at first. "I remember during that period taking £11 on my best week. We really lived on the breadline. But I didn't worry about money. I knew that it was the right thing to do and that we'd manage somehow."

His method of healing has evolved gradually. "And it is still changing from year to year." One of the characteristics of his treatment is that it puts people into an altered state of consciousness. While I was at his house, I watched several sessions during which most people drifted off and lost consciousness. During this time many began to exercise their arms, legs or whatever part of their body was in need of manipulation. In certain cases the movements were far freer and more supple than those they could attempt in a waking state.

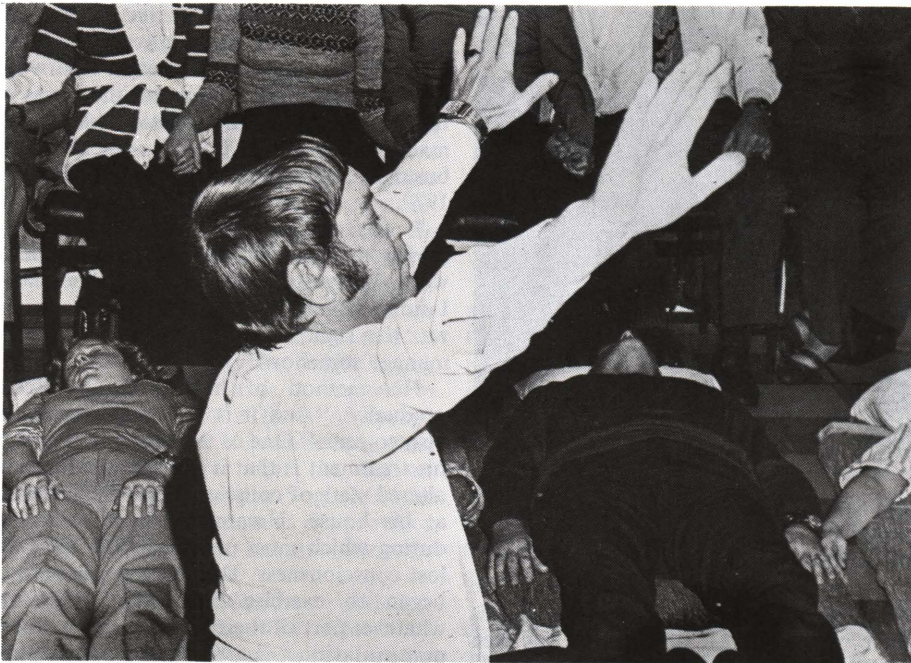
It is not suggestion: John Cain does not instruct them to do anything, although if they are in only a shallow altered state he tells them to let movement happen if they feel a spontaneous urge. Sometimes the physical self-manipulation is quite strenuous. On occasions, it takes an unexpected form.

"People have got up and danced," says Cain. "Others have done a series of yoga exercises though they've never attempted them while in a conscious state of mind." No-one, he claims, has come to any harm. On the contrary, the physical activity is conducive to their improvement. It is as if, during the session, they are taken over by some higher intelligence that knows what is good for them. At his public sessions, the altered state is experienced by a large proportion of his audience.

There are those who are especially susceptible to Cain's healing. Mrs Joan Kelly, who first came for help because of depression and bad arthritis, is one of those who goes out like a light. Mrs Kelly was sitting on a settee, having told me about her first experience of Cain's treatment — "I felt so peaceful, I could have happily died," she recalls — and explained that her ankle still gave her trouble.

Sitting on the other side of the room, Cain raised his hand and immediately the conscious Mrs Kelly switched off. She raised her right leg and began to rotate the affected ankle. After a couple of minutes, she stood up, still in an altered state, and began to walk back and forth, putting her weight on that same leg.

After she had sat down again, Mrs Kelly surfaced from her trance as rapidly as she had entered into it. "My ankle feels much better now," she said. Mrs Kelly has told her doctor, who commented on her general improvement, that she had been treated by John Cain. In this case, there was no opposition. "She said, 'If it's doing you



John Cain at work during one of his regular public sessions.

good, then I'm happy.' "

Cain does not profess to know how the healing process works. "I just know that it does." He does believe, though, that the effect he exerts on others is not of him, but channelled through him, and that he is guided and directed by spirit entities. Neither is he able to explain how he is able to pass on his power to others, a ploy which helps him to handle the six-day a week flow of people who visit his house for healing. The day before I visited him, he and a band of helpers saw 30 people in the afternoon and 50 in the evening. He looked set to see a similar number while I was there.

While he usually sees everyone himself at some point during the sessions, his helpers act by proxy, inducing the same altered state and healing effect as Cain. That Thursday, there were half a dozen of the 40 helpers who work with him at his house. Most, like Fred Swarbrick, have their own personal reason to thank Cain. Having seen the remarkable recovery of his grandson, Jason Tullett, the boy who was cured of a brain tumour, Fred Swarbrick also underwent an operation-saving cure. "I had been suffering from kidney stones for years and was due to have an operation. After John had seen me, I passed six stones the next day." Fred Swarbrick's kidneys are in such good shape now that he has been passed fit as a donor. He has seen several other members of his family benefit from Cain's treatment and gives some of his time to helping others through Cain.

"All I need do is give my consent for healing to work through others and it will happen," says Cain. "But they've got to get their egos out of the way." For his part, Fred Swarbrick says, "I link up mentally with John. That's the only way I can explain it."

Normal explanations for Cain's healing just do not stick. What, for example, is one to make of the fact that the altered state

and healing itself can be triggered off by his photograph alone? I watched two people react to his picture in much the same way as they would to his actual presence. In fact he has found that picture sensitivity is a good preliminary test of an individual's susceptibility to healing. That goes for his photograph on the front cover of *Alpha*. Try concentrating on it, he suggests, and you might find that it triggers off a reaction in you. If it does, let us know. We would be interested to hear.

The process by which Cain influences his patients and transfers his healing power to others is obscure. It has been suggested that something like hypnotism must be involved in his healing, but there are too many factors that do not fit. Young children and animals have proved equally susceptible to his healing and on several well-attested occasions he has administered absent healing. In some cases, as with the cure of young Jason Tullett, he has used a blend of absent and proxy healing. "Hypnotism cannot explain this sort of thing," says Cain.

While Jason was lying in hospital with a mounting fever and pain from the malignant growth on his brain, his father thought of phoning John Cain more or less on impulse as a last resort. He had heard of him but never met him. Cain gave Jason's aunt, who was the one who actually made the phone call, instructions to lay her hands on Jason's head. The treatment brought relief and marked the first step to his complete recovery.

That was in December 1977. According to the hospital, an operation to remove the growth would have been too dangerous so a course of radio-and chemo-therapy was administered. Over the same period, Jason received healing from Cain. In the following June, he suffered from a relapse: the same extreme symptoms that had led to his hospitalization recurred. Cain spent an intense long session with the boy. A brain scan carried out a month later revealed that

the tumour had completely gone. "Today he's a perfectly normal boy," says his grandfather, Fred Swarbrick.

Dr Donald Blything, a consultant psychologist and lecturer in psychology, is quoted in *You Don't Know John Cain?* as saying: "It is not at all easy to say what takes place during a healing session. All I can say is that I can induce an altered state of consciousness with the use of hypnotherapy. But I acknowledge that John Cain has superior gifts in this field and would say that his ability to induce the altered state 'en masse' is extraordinary and extremely beneficial."

Cain does not know how to explain the effect either. During public meetings, he practises what he calls his beam out. He stands on the stage of the Civic Hall and something he can only liken to a fusion of minds takes place. The effect ripples out from Cain to those present and the altered state is induced remotely. As at the sessions at his home, he oversees the whole proceedings.

On a one-to-one basis with patients he sometimes physically touches people, but does not always feel it is necessary. "In some cases I feel moved to do so because it's psychologically necessary for that person." In all his healing work, he feels guided and directed in what he does.

While he does not automatically sense what is wrong with someone and prefers people to tell him, he has the ability to pick up health problems intuitively that may be unknown to the sufferer. "At one time I have been through all forms of mediumship," says Cain. "Now it's there when I need it."

Although his track record is impressive, Cain's outspoken frankness and methods have not endeared him to all in the healing movement. There are those who see grounds for criticism in the fact that he smokes heavily and may even have a cigarette alight when he is healing. It does not bother him. If I get results, which is all that matters, so what? is his reaction.

He has a contempt for hypocrisy. The fact that he has antagonised those who believe there is a certain way for healers to behave and act by his own way of going about his work is clearly something in which he takes an impish delight. It is also part of his matter-of-factness. The last thing Cain can be accused of is pretentiousness. He might be an extraordinary healer, but he is also a man with ordinary tastes, such as a pint at the local on Saturday nights, which he neither makes anything of nor tries to hide. John Cain is not going to put on a saintly front to comply with anyone else's image of the perfect healer.

His imperfections do not bother those whom he has helped. For them, the fact that he has made his extraordinary talents available when they were most in need is sufficient.

This year, on 7 October, the *Liverpool Echo* will carry a notice commemorating a miraculous recovery. It appeared the year before and will continue to do so annually until Sheila Speirs' dying day.

Release from the past

Dr Luise Sand and her two colleagues have pioneered a form of accelerated psychotherapy that liberates people from past problems, be they from this or previous lives. David Harvey reports.

WITHIN the healing community there are specialists, much as there are within the world of orthodox medicine. The realm of one small group, comprising Dr Luise Sand, Hugh Marlow and Inga Hooper, is psychotherapy. Or, to give their treatment its proper title, soul-directed therapy.

Just as spiritual healing directed to organic and physical ailments is based on the belief that man is multi-dimensional, this form of treatment works on exactly the same assumption. And, like most other forms of healing, soul-directed therapy's final goal is to establish wholeness by eradicating psychological disturbances and their causes. At the same time, it aims to bring the individual to an understanding of his tri-partite nature as body, mind and spirit. "This is man's natural state," says Dr Sand. "He is not capable of really fulfilling himself until his wholeness has been restored."

After a career during which Dr. Sand practised both medicine and psychotherapy, she sees this new work as her mission. "I gave up my medical practice to take up what I regard as my final task." Soul psychotherapy does not deny the efficacy of orthodox psychotherapy, it simply ranges far beyond the limitations that are normally imposed. Thus it takes into account an extra dimension to man and the possibility that some disturbances do not have their origins in this life but are the legacy of former existences. "This is not to disparage conventional methods," Dr Sand quickly adds. "We've just extended them. It's a form of therapy that's not fenced in by a limited, material view of man."

In common with healers who work in other fields, Dr Sand and her group find that people usually come to them when all else has failed. Normally they make contact through recommendation from a former patient.

Sometimes the symptoms are psychological. Many patients suffer from apparently causeless anxiety, fear or rebelliousness. Others have come to Dr Sand initially because of a physical condition which is later discovered to be induced or influenced by a psychological or emotional problem. "I never make a sharp distinction between medical treatment and psychic therapy."

Dr Sand is one of those rare and, for the future development of healing, extremely important individuals, who bridges the divide that separates the orthodox from the fringe therapies.

Of German birth, she qualified in the United States as a doctor of medicine

followed by training in psychiatry. From an early stage, her interests extended to other healing traditions. Always having a sympathy for natural, safe and effective methods of treatment, she has collected ideal from around the world. "I had also known for many years that I was a good healing medium."

Early on she had reached the conclusion that the patient's state of consciousness was a key ingredient in health and sickness. This, allied to her belief in the complex nature of man and the fact that some causes of disturbance can be buried deep beneath the surface, led to the development of her present system of treatment, a kind of consciousness spring-cleaning.

Consciousness — a key ingredient in health

A good deal of the group's work is concerned with helping people to rid themselves of the blocks that frustrate their ability to function normally and fully.

In an as yet unpublished introduction to soul-directed therapy, Dr Sand explains the way in which the treatment clears the blocks that clutter consciousness.

"The therapist must every keep in mind that the patient's spirit has learned from all life experience. No experience is to be despised, therefore. In most instances the patient is made aware of the specific value of what has happened to him. A major purpose of treatment is to enable the patient to relinquish his negative emotional attachment to events and people of his past and present, whether this emotional involvement has been conscious or unconscious. Upon such release he is then able to learn the lesson inherent in the experiences and thus put a stop to their repetition in one or another form. These repetitions often remind the observer of a cracked phonograph record playing the same groove over and over again. Like the phonograph needle which has been lifted over the defect, the freed individual is finally able to go on to new and different life experiences and opportunities for progression."

Aside from the far-reaching purpose of the treatment, which Dr Sand calls "clearing out", the methods employed are unusual and of great interest in their own right.

As a skilled psychotherapist, Dr Sand is experienced in the art of teasing out submerged facts. But some are deeply buried and inaccessible to ordinary psychotherapy. This is where the other

members of the group come in.

Towards the end of her medical career, Dr Sand worked in Germany. She had already discovered the merit of using a suitable medium to help her in probing for the deeper causes of disturbance and providing information from the other side which, in certain cases, contributed to the rehabilitation of her patients. In the mid-seventies, she came to England in search of a bilingual medium fluent in German and English. Her search led to Inga Hooper, a medium with an established reputation. Born of a German aristocratic family, Ingelborg Baroness Trutschler von Falkenstein, married an Englishman and settled in this country under the name Inga Hooper. She fitted the bill perfectly. "Something clicked as soon as we met," recalls Dr Sand.

Around the same time, Hugh Marlow had made contact with Inga Hooper. "I was impressed with her mediumship," he says, "because it dealt with future developments and possibilities on a broad scale and not just personal information."

From an early age, he was aware of a strong intuitive faculty and his contact with ideas and teachings in the East, where war-time service had taken him, consolidated and developed his thinking about the spiritual and higher faculties of man. Balancing that, his knowledge of psychological processes was deepened through training in psychoanalysis at the Tavistock Institute in the sixties.

Today, his work in management consultancy, which is primarily concerned with counselling, makes use of his various skills in advising and guiding executives as to how to define their goals. While he regards his work here as complementary to that of the group, his talents are also applied to the group's therapy work. Hugh Marlow, and his two partners, believe it was no accident that they were brought together.

Intuitive and mediumistically gathered information plays an important part in their treatment. Inga Hooper describes herself as "the psychic consultant for the group". Dr Sand amplifies the point. "Inga can learn hidden facts that I couldn't ferret out that were impeding the free flow of life and living. At times it is a traumatic experience in this incarnation, sometimes from a previous life." In some cases, the information is not of immediate value, but is recorded and used at a later stage.

But if the patient is confronted with such information, how can he begin to evaluate it if it lies beyond conscious recall? "It must strike a chord or lead them to

recognise patterns in their lives that they can understand." says Dr Sand. What check is there that the patient has not latched on mistakenly to an experience that was not the root of his problem? The answer, says Hugh Marlow, is that even if there is temporary relief, the problem would just manifest again, perhaps in another form. "when the insight is genuine, the result is full recovery."

Revelations of past traumas channelled to those who come for treatment often have a sharp, cathartic effect. The individual can experience a strong emotional reaction followed by a feeling of release. "In our way," she adds, "we can cut down the time psychotherapy usually takes to a fraction." Already hundreds of people have been successfully treated in this way. Although the group does not advertise, people continue to find their way to them in growing numbers.

Dr Sand cites the case of a 39-year-old man who had been plagued all his life with acute anxiety, although he had no

conscious memory of any explanation for this. "We found that he had been badly mistreated by his parents at the age of two," says Dr Sand. "Once he had relived the whole trauma, he became free of symptoms. 'My God, is that why I've lived as I've done for the past 37 years?' was his reaction." Others have sensed a similar release, claims Dr Sand, after uncovering a traumatic experience that has been carried over from a previous existence.

Regression is done without hypnosis: Inga Hooper tunes in to the person and picks up the relevant information. Moreover, Dr Sand has reservations about the advisability of hypnotic regression. "I do not believe it is good for the soul and can cause trouble by taking people back to incarnations which they are not ready for".

At present, their therapeutic work is mainly concentrated in West Germany, but they envisage a time when a treatment centre will be set up in the U.K. Assisting individuals to find their true selves will be a

central part of the group's purpose. The centre in the U.K. will follow the pattern established in West Germany where the treatment has been extended to include other kinds of "natural medicine", a recognised medical speciality in Germany.

"Our therapy comes from the heart, not the intellect," says Dr Sand. "It sets people free. They are freed from anxiety and more fully able to realise their inner potential. They feel confidence and trust in the law of cause and effect. They also learn to love themselves and increase in soul."

The aim is not to transform people into mystical recluses. "Once you've achieved wholeness, you are not going to sit on cloud nine. Wholeness enables you to take hold of life with both hands, to live with gusto and welcome change." What more appealing prospect could any therapy hold out?

Inga Hooper is co-author with K.J. Westward of the Book of Rings, Regency Press (U.K. £2.40; U.S.A \$6) 1977, an inspirational work on the nature of man.

Instant dentistry

When Evangelist Willard Fuller prays for his patients their teeth are filled with silver, gold or porcelain. Bryce Bond tells the story of this extraordinary "Spiritual alchemist".

WHEN I first heard about the dentistry of Willard Fuller, I chuckled. But that was a long time ago. Sometimes words fail to express what one sees and feels. And even after you see it, you don't believe it, for we have been conditioned not to believe in miracles.

Willard Fuller is not unique. Others have been blessed with the same gift, but none is as prolific as the bearded six-footer, an energetic former Baptist whose gentle wife, Margaret, a graduate psychologist, assists

in the healing ministry.

Once a real southern Baptist, and pastor of four churches, he became a full-time evangelist but was eventually excommunicated, he says, for asking questions which the Baptist theologians could not answer.

"Then," he recalls, "in 1960 God brought me into a healing ministry. He brought it in through what the old-time Penetcostals called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and you can well imagine what

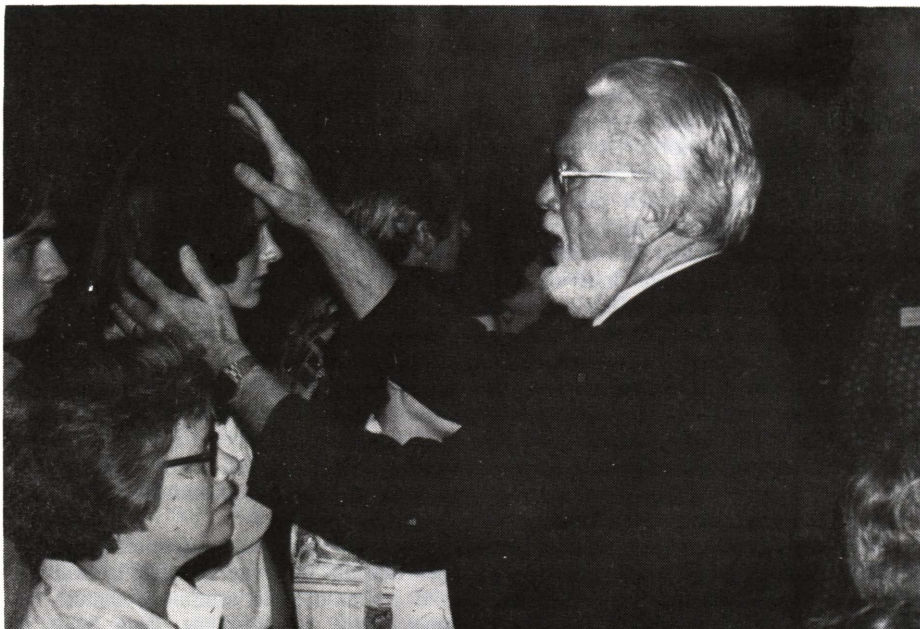
happened to my Baptist work at that point. It came to an absolute zero. But other doors began to open and so I began to conduct campaigns, being sponsored by various bodies, including interestingly enough, the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship."

At his first campaign, says Fuller, the Lord spoke to him and said, "You lay hands on them and pray for them." He did, and people began reporting that they had been cured. "I saw people healed of all kinds of maladies and malformities. It was a marvellous thing. I was having a wonderful time."

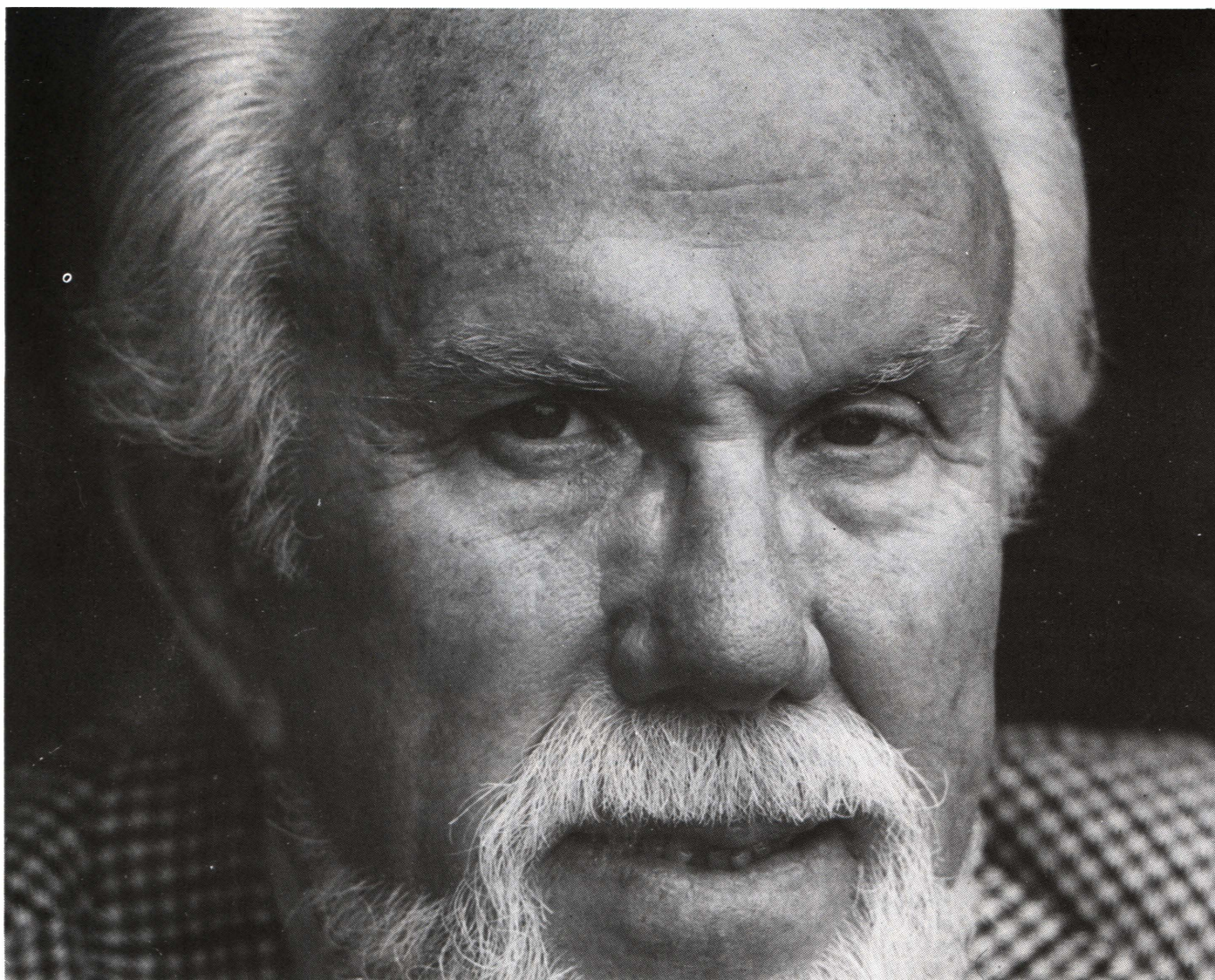
It was during one of his campaigns, in Jonesboro, Louisiana, that Willard Fuller heard about a man who laid hands on people and prayed for their dental needs, with the result that cavities in teeth were filled and a variety of other dental happenings took place. This he had to see, so he drove one hundred miles to Shreveport to attend one of A.C. McCabe's services.

The healer began by treating members of his audience for a variety of other conditions, saving the dental cases until last. Eventually McCabe announced: "If you have cavities in your teeth that need to be straightened, if you have gum disorders, whatever it is, you come and I'll pray for you and God will meet your dental needs."

McCabe moved rapidly from one person to another, simply laying hands on them and praying. Then he produced a flashlight and a mirror and asked them to examine what had happened.



Some 25,000 people have evidence of this "miracle in the mouth".



Fuller was six feet from one of the people who had been treated: a woman who had never been to a dentist in her life, and had one cavity which needed filling. "When she looked in the mirror and saw the tooth her eyes opened wide. She gave a little scream of exuberance and got terribly excited about it. 'It has silver in it,' she shouted."

The visiting healer moved in quick to see for himself, peering over the preacher's shoulder into her mouth. "And, so help me, there was silver . . . bright, shiny and looking like a newly minted coin."

For two-and-a-half hours Fuller watched a procession of people being treated by McCabe, then suddenly the healer pointed at him and said, "Now I'm going to pray for you and ask God to bless you." He was a little man and he had to climb up on a two-step platform to be at Fuller's height. Then, says Fuller, God spoke to him.

"I remember it as if it happened just a couple of minutes ago. He said, 'Think it not strange, my son, all the things that thou hast seen me do through him, this, my servant. For all the things that thou has seen me do through him, I shall do through thee, and greater things I shall do through thee than thou hast seen me do through him.'"

Tremendously excited by this promise, Fuller had every intention of introducing dental healing into his work immediately. But he found it needed great courage. Every day, for six weeks, he prayed to God to give him courage to invite members of his audience to come forward for dental treatment. But when he held his meetings he never found the courage to do more than treat the sick for other ailments.

One night a man asked him to pray for him because he was suffering with a stomach ulcer and had been in great pain for 20 years. A cold drink of milk was the only thing that would give him a few minutes of relief. The moment Fuller laid hands on him the man felt a sensation just like swallowing cold milk and the pain disappeared. He took the microphone and described his experience to everyone.

Next night, the man turned up again and told what had happened, confirming that the entire day had been free of pain. On the third night he was back again. This time he stood up and said, "Preacher, I have one cavity in a tooth back here. I believe that if God can heal an ulcer, He can fix this cavity for me. Will you lay hands on me and pray for me for the meeting of my dental needs?"

Having lacked the courage to initiate this

type of healing, Fuller now faced a challenge and of course he accepted it. He placed his hands on the man's head and prayed: "In the name of Jesus, be thou everywhere whole". The man then announced that his tooth was fixed and his wife was so delighted when she examined what had happened that "she had an old Pentecostal fit". And that launched Willard Fuller on his dental ministry campaign.

Today, conservatively, there are some 25,000 people in America who have the evidence of this "miracle in the mouth". Willard Fuller has found that the healings that occur fall into two categories which he classifies as "miracles" (which are instantaneous results) and "healings" (which are slow growths, taking anything from seconds to days before they are complete).

Those who have seen a filling gradually form describe it as a small bright spot which becomes larger until it fills the whole cavity, like the speeded-up picture of a rose blooming. Porcelain fillings are common occurrences and are of particular interest because they form fast enough for witnesses to watch the growth, but slow enough to give many people a chance to witness first-hand what is happening.



Songs before the healing is Paul Esch's practice.

Interestingly, where there are several cavities to be filled in the same mouth, one or two will be filled with gold and the rest in silver or porcelain. I saw one cavity which was filled with a ruby-like substance of translucent quality. Twice spectators have reported seeing a platinum-type metal used as a filling, and two tiny cavities later contained fillings that sparkled like diamonds.

When I saw him at work, he asked those present who needed dental healing to join a circle. His technique is very simple. He gently smacks the person on both cheeks at the same time and says, "In the name of Jesus, be thou whole." That moment of high belief seems to produce a spiritual alchemy.

Fuller then produced a hand mirror for the patient and a dental mirror and flashlight for himself. The excitement bordered on hysteria. The first person to open his mouth had two silver fillings turn to gold. Others received new caps, filled cavities, or their teeth were straightened. At no time did he go into the mouth except with the dental mirror.

As I stood in line, I did not make my request for dental healing. I was much too busy watching the faces of those in the circle. Once you see new teeth poking through blank gums, then you begin to open up your consciousness and become a believer.

All the while my gums tingled and a few moments later I experienced an anaesthesia effect and my whole mouth became numb. Then I started picking small pieces of tarter (solidified calcium) off my tongue. These had been dislodged from under my gums.

Among the patients — he usually sees 40 or more people a night — who have given their testimonies was a 66-year-old woman

who had no teeth but whose dental plates did not fit properly. After healing they felt tight and she was very happy. But by next day they were not so tight and she called Fuller in dismay. He said he did not understand what was happening but he was sure God would make everything turn out alright. Next day she called again, in even greater distress. Now, she told Fuller, the plates would not fit at all. He could do no more than ask her to keep her faith.

On the following day the woman phoned again, but this time she was excited. "I know why my plates don't fit," she told Fuller. "I'm cutting new teeth like a baby." Seventeen days later she had 32 new, perfect teeth which had grown to full maturity.

Some of the gold has been analysed and is reported to be much purer than that normally used for dental work. It gives the appearance of having been poured into the cavities while molten, though if that were the case the heat would cause intense pain and would shatter the tooth. Many dentists and scientists have witnessed Willard Fuller's healing ministry but most refuse to allow their names to be used with their testimonies.

This attitude, and the scepticism that he encounters, does not surprise Fuller. "God gives us what we ask for," he believes. "And sometimes we want the wrong things and God gives us that. I talk to people about reverse faith: people who believe it is *not* going to happen. They come with the intention of proving that it doesn't happen, and it does look like God gives them exactly what they want. If you want to prove it doesn't happen, it's easy to do because it won't happen for you, and you have perfect proof.

"What I'm saying is that if you want a

way out, you don't have to work at it very much. It seems there's always a door out through which you can pass." Like the sceptical dentist who examined a young girl before her parents took her to a Fuller meeting. When they took her back to the dentist with the cavities filled by healing, he came up with an explanation. "You've switched children on me!" he told her astonished parents.

Fuller believes "we walk in the atmosphere of our own believing" and that when we get in tune with God (our Higher Self) then we have the power to change the environment around us. Those who attend his services have experiences of a spiritual nature, as well as healing of their physical conditions. Some report a heightened psychic ability which they demonstrate after being in the prayer line while others claim to have been blessed with a greater insight and deeper awareness of the nature of things.

Fire balls have appeared over the churches where Fuller has been treating people. Many people have reported seeing them spinning and hovering right above the church roof. In fact, so many experiences of this nature occur around his ministry that it is difficult to lump them all together under a group name.

In addition to seeing Fuller's dental healing, I have also seen that of his protégé, Paul Esch. The Fullers invited Esch to join their healing mission in 1968, a year after they had first met him. I saw the results for myself at Woodstock, New York, where 30-year-old Esch demonstrated for a group of about 20 people. What I witnessed was a miracle.

He began by singing songs of his own composition, accompanying himself on a guitar. He sang about God and Love and we found ourselves caught up in an energy that affected us all. Then he asked those who had dental needs to stand.

He produced a flashlight and a dental mirror and looked into the mouths of those present. He asked first what their problems were and if they had any gold in their mouths. As the flashlight beam probed inside the mouth there was a flash of bright, shining gold. On one lady, as we peered into her mouth, we saw silver fillings turning to very bright gold. Black cavities filled with gold as we watched. Some cavities filled with a white substance and all this manifested before our eyes.

One of those present had a few empty places in her mouth. Within a few moments she tasted blood, then a tooth broke through the surface of the gum. Almost all those present noticed their teeth had become whiter. Some members of the group received two or three gold fillings.

The work of Esch and Fuller is adding a new dimension to healing. Its aim is to make people more aware of God's reality so that they can later achieve attunement with the Supreme Power. Meanwhile, dental surgeons need not be too dejected about loss of business, for they are assured of one regular customer. Whenever Willard Fuller has dental needs he goes to . . . a dentist.

From Uri to Ori

Ori Seboria discovered he could bend metal paranormally after seeing Uri Geller on TV. Dr Heinz Berendt, chairman of the Israeli Parapsychology Society, reports on a two-part study of the young Israeli.

PIONEER researcher Dr J.B. Rhine wrote in a letter to me (February 15, 1974): "It is gradually becoming a fairly settled conclusion that these demonstrations Uri Geller is giving are genuinely parapsychic. Because of the appearance they bear of being magical performances, we are all reluctant to reach decisions . . . The phenomena are so dramatic as to be almost incredible even to parapsychologists . . . but one had better regard it as only tentative."

About five years have passed since then, and five years too since my paper, "Uri Geller — Pro and Con" appeared in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (December 1974), after all the doubts which had been raised since Geller's stage performances in Israel.

This gave the established scientists in our country good reason to refuse earnest work in the field of psi a refusal maintained up to the present day in Israel. But in the same paper I wrote: "The discrepancy in views on Uri Geller requires us at least to ask whether there may be, additionally, a genuine psi-power which enables him to perform unmistakable psi experiments. I personally consider such a view to be completely tenable."

Since then, all who have followed the developments in this field, who know the literature, have read Charles Panati's *The Geller Papers* and the work of Professors Hasted and Taylor, or who have seen Hans Bender's films of Silvio and Girard, have no doubts any more about the genuine possibility of paranormal metal bending.

But still, for each of us, reading or watching films is less than being present at an experimental session where, under fairly controlled conditions, things actually happen. So, I eagerly used the first opportunity to arrange such a meeting, with a 16-year-old Israeli boy, Ori Seboria, who had discovered his abilities after watching Uri Geller on TV in Australia where he and his family live. He agreed to demonstrate for us during a visit to Israel.

My first meeting with Ori occurred in my Jerusalem dental clinic on Wednesday, December 22, 1976. Also present by invitation were A. Isenberg, editor, *KIDMA Israel Journal of Development*, a member of the Council of the Israeli Parapsychology Society; Ms. C. Kloetzel, president-to-be of the IPS; Prof. F.S. Rothschild, psychiatrist (formerly of the Hadassah Medical School, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem), scientific adviser to IPS; Prof. Treinin, dean of the Natural Sciences Faculty, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Prof F. Tuller, professor of metallurgy, the Hebrew University of



Ori Seboria

Jerusalem.

I had requested Prof Tuller to provide some metal rods for use in the experiment. He furnished for the purpose a number of pieces of metal measuring approximately 100 mm in length, 10 mm in height and 3 mm in thickness, made of steel, bronze, zinc, etc., which he placed on the table. Mr Isenberg had brought along a stainless steel teaspoon, about 100 mm long, and I provided two Yale keys.

The proceedings were recorded on tape, registering the questions and answers, and subsequently the reports of the participants concerning their individual experiences with Ori, as well as a first discussion of the results.

The Experiments

Ori chose one of the metal rods provided by Prof Tuller and started to rub it between the fingers of his right hand. After a short while he stated that he felt that positive results would be achieved, but that he would prefer to work in the presence of only one person at a time. Somewhat reluctantly, I agreed that he could leave the waiting room of my clinic, where all of us had been sitting, and to go, with Prof Tuller, into the clinic proper. (While Prof Tuller and Ori were out of the waiting

room, I expressed my own preference to have at least one additional observer for the subsequent experiments.)

After about 5-7 minutes, Prof Tuller returned, with Ori, holding the metal rod rubbed by Ori between the fingers of one hand, all the while being closely scrutinized by the professor. The rod was clearly bent. Our efforts to produce a corresponding bend in a control rod (a rod of the same dimensions and material, also provided by Prof Tuller) was unsuccessful in spite of our applying considerable force. Prof Tuller reported that any attempt by Ori to bend the rod by muscular force "would undoubtedly have been discovered by me."

Ori reiterated his preference to work with the smallest number of persons present at any one time, but did agree to the presence of a third person. Prof Treinin picked up another one of Prof Tuller's metal rods; Prof Rothschild similarly selected one of the two Yale keys; and both men remained with Ori during the experiment.

In about five minutes, Prof Treinin returned, displaying the rod which showed a bend similar to that obtained during Prof Tuller's session with Ori, about 10°. Prof Treinin's report was similar to Prof

Tuller's, and he did not conceal his astonishment at having witnessed at first hand a phenomenon about which he had previously only read or heard.

Prof Rothschild remained with Ori for approximately another five minutes. When he returned, he displayed in his hand the Yale key, bent to an angle of about 70°. Some of those present tried to bend the "control" Yale key (i.e., the "twin" of the one displayed by Prof Rothschild after the experimental session with Ori), unsuccessfully, although very strong efforts were made to do so. (Subsequently, during my own absence from the waiting room, Prof Treinin picked up the bent Yale key and tried to bend it further in the direction of the bending. He told me that it broke into two pieces "without the application of any great force".

I include here A. Isenberg's own report on his experimental session with Ori, involving the stainless steel spoon:

"I gave him a steel spoon which he had neither seen nor touched before. My own efforts to bend the spoon, first with one hand, then with both hands, had been unsuccessful: the spoon appeared to be completely rigid.

"The atmosphere in the clinic was entirely informal. I offered Ori a piece of chewing gum which he readily accepted and which he began to chew. He held my spoon in one hand, rubbing it between index finger and thumb, the other three fingers resting upon the spoon's handle. For about three minutes nothing seemed to happen to the spoon which I watched continuously as he went on stroking it. I did not see the spoon begin to bend.

"All of a sudden, there was a rather loud noise, explosive, somewhat similar to the sound produced by smashing a blown-up paper bag with one's hands. It was immediately followed by the sound of the two parts of the (by now) broken spoon landing on the floor. I did not see them fall.

"Ori rubbed one hand with the other, saying he had been hurt. There was a fresh scratch, about 4 or 5 centimeters long, on the back of the hand which had held the spoon. He said the handle part of the spoon had suddenly pressed against the palm of the hand. The spoon had broken into two parts, with very sharp edges.

Placing the two edges together, I received the impression that the spoon must have bent somewhat before breaking or snapping apart. I gave both parts of the spoon to Prof Tuller at the latter's request after rejoining the others.

"The above account is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. For what it may be worth, I do not believe that Ori resorted to any kind of trickery so that, personally, I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the phenomenon as described above."

When my own turn came, I selected the second Yale key, took it, and with Ori went into my clinic, where I prepared my photo camera, cine camera and the mercury flood-lights to be used with them. I then handed Ori the key and he began to rub it lightly between the fingers of his right hand

as I started to film the proceedings. He said it would take quite a while; I therefore put out the flood-light for the cinema camera.

When, some minutes later, Ori said "I can feel it starting", I re-lit the flood-light which, however, suddenly ceased to function after being "on" for about two seconds: all my efforts to relight it proved to be in vain. (There is, of course, no way of deciding whether this sudden malfunctioning of the flood-light was just an accident or whether it was in some way connected with the activities in progress).

After another three or four minutes of further rubbing between his fingers, the key slowly assumed the shape shown in the photograph reproduced here. Once it reached the shape shown, Ori stated that it would not bend any further. We then returned to the waiting group and re-joined the other participants.

Discussion

During the subsequent discussion, it was decided that Prof Tuller should take all the metal objects used during the experiments to submit them to metallurgical examinations in his laboratory at the Hebrew University. (This process has not yet been completed, and the results will become available only some time after the issue of the present report.)

At a first attempt to explain the phenomena which we had witnessed, Prof Treinin smilingly dismissed the idea that Ori could have produced the bending of the metals by applying some chemicals to his own hand or fingers — a possibility likewise dismissed by all the others present. Also to be ruled out is any possibility that other objects were substituted by some sleight of hand for those brought to the experimental session by the observers. In fact, Ori himself had absolutely no advance notion of what objects would be brought to the meeting, let alone their specific shapes and dimensions.

Although I should have preferred to have all the experiments conducted in the presence of at least two witnesses, I want to make it clear that I do not entertain the slightest doubt whatsoever of the veracity and authenticity of the reports of every one of the witnesses whose names are stated in this Report. To this I should like to add that Professors Treinin and Tuller attended the session only because of their interest in alleged phenomena affecting their own professional sphere of interest and competence; they did so with an alert skepticism, following Ori's every movement with concentration, even suspicion. Both are convinced that Ori did not resort to trickery and did not use muscular strength to produce the observed phenomena — a fact which adds weight to the significance of this report.

Some readers of this first report expressed a justified reservation about the fact that Ori had been allowed to take the rod to the second room all by himself; this might have given him an opportunity to bend the rod by mechanical force and unobserved before the start of his stroking activity in Prof Tuller's presence.

However, it seems to me quite unjustified to invalidate the whole experimental series on account of this possibility. I decided to clarify the question of a possibility of fraud by a second inquiry with the participants which yielded the following statements:

Prof Tuller agreed that Ori had the rod (and only one rod!) in his hands while going in to the other room. But before starting the experiment he grasped the rod at the lowest end showing it to Prof Tuller and looking at it himself affirming to both that the rod was still unbent. This was repeated for the next 3 to 4 minutes. Only then both observed the starting of the bending which became stronger during the following minutes. He also commented that only after this first experiment Ori returned to the waiting room and stayed later on without returning to the clinic and the material was brought in by the different observers themselves, who had picked up the items — rod, key, spoon — from the table, so that Ori had no access to them, or to any substitute, before starting the observed rubbing.

Profs Treinin and Rothschild confirmed that they themselves brought the items into the clinic and handed them to Ori only when their turn came. Ori, again controlling the process, looked at and showed the item in the beginning in the *unbent condition* and again only after some minutes the bending started gradually. Forceful bending would "without doubt have been detected". Exchange was impossible.

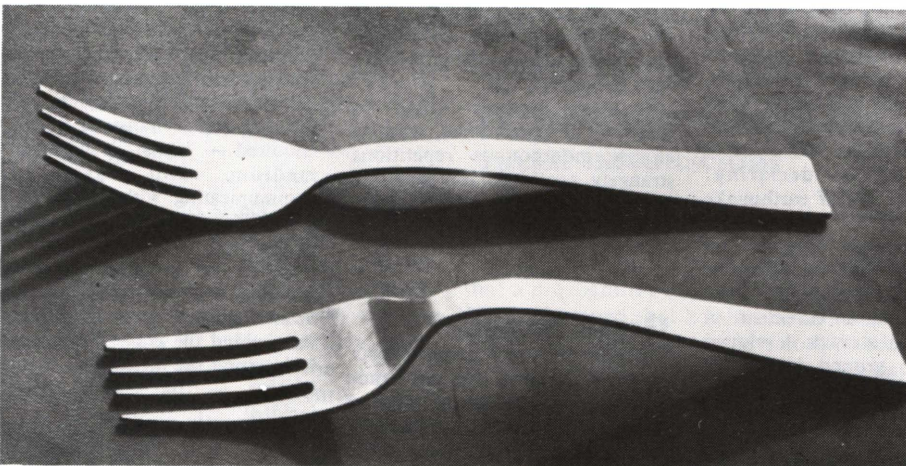
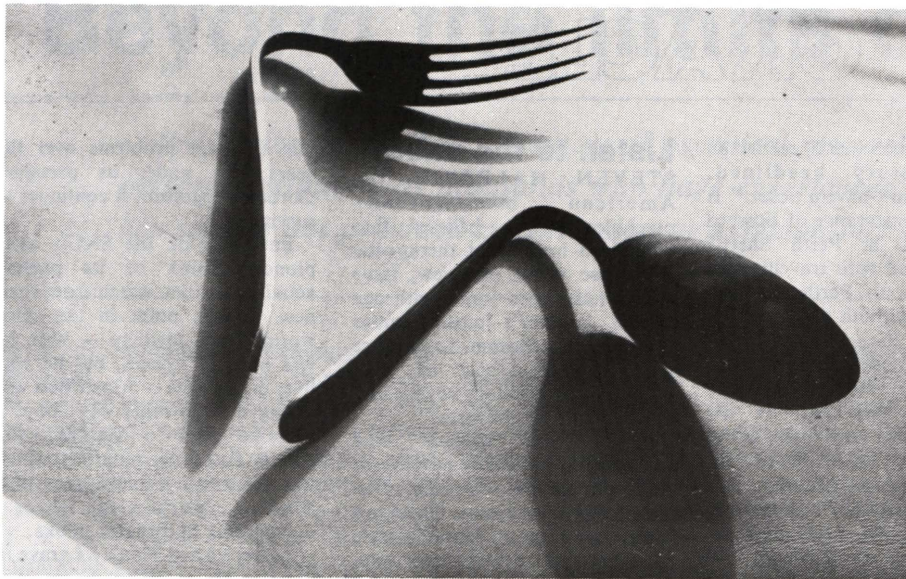
During the second part of the experiment, Ori never left his chair near the window and picked up one of two keys on a dish and made his choice of two identical spoons handed to him.

As for myself, following my visit to Prof Bender in the summer of 1976 and my participation at the Utrecht Conference of the Parapsychology Association in August 1976, I no longer had any doubt about the possible genuineness of the bending phenomenon. But I had not expected to be present at a successful experiment in this sphere quite so soon. This is why I regret that owing to the malfunctioning of the flood-light, I could not film the entire process and that my own experimental session with Ori came at the end of the entire session, when he had already begun to tire.

Consequently I expressed to Ori my hope that he would permit the conduct of a second series of experiments, with myself and one other witness, to be filmed so as to show the motions of his fingers; and to take still photos of various phases of the experiment. Ori smiled and said, "OK!" and we decided to have this second series at his home in Holon, shortly before his scheduled return to Australia.

Present during the second experiments on December 31 were Michael F. Doron, consultant, Tel-Aviv University Centre for Technological and Interdisciplinary Forecasting, Ori's 22-year-old brother Yaron, and the author.

Upon entering the home, Doron and I found both young persons to be in an



Within 10 minutes from the start of the 3rd experiment, the cutlery had bent noticeably.

excellent mood. A pop-music record was being played in an adjacent room, and the music remained audible almost throughout the entire time of the visit. Ori himself greeted the visitors dressed in a sports fatigue suit. His brother walked about the home barefoot.

1st Experiment

Since the mercury lamp of the film flood-light had suddenly stopped working during the experiment with Ori the previous Wednesday, I was most interested in filming Ori with the film camera in natural light and therefore requested him to be seated near a window. The table on which I deposited the metal items which I had brought along was at a distance of only about one metre, and Ori seated himself between table and window in a very comfortable pose. I placed before him two identical Yale keys (fitting my car), first on the table, thereafter on the window sill.

While I was filming, Ori took one of the two Yale keys between his hands and started to stroke lightly between his fingers in his usual manner. About 3 or 4 minutes later he said that he had the impression that it was starting. We were able to note a slight bend. About 4 or 5 minutes afterwards the key exhibited an unambiguous bend of 12-15°. During the period of the slight stroking of the key Ori

was kept under constant observation by myself and Mr Doron. Furthermore, I took additional film which I believe will bear out our impression that Ori did not use force: any such efforts would clearly have to register in the pressure of his hands. When the bending had reached about 45°, Ori remarked that he would not succeed in bending it beyond the degree already achieved.

I thereupon attempted to bend the identical (control) key between my fingers; the only result of this sustained efforts was that the hole in the key left a distinct impression in my right hand while the impress of the serrated teeth was equally prominent in my left hand. As for the key itself, it showed no curvature at all in spite of my great effort to produce one. Mr Doron, who made the same effort equally in vain, confirmed the great rigidity of the key.

2nd Experiment:

From my steel cutlery at home I had brought along a pair of spoons and a pair of forks. We confirmed their identical shapes which should make it easy to verify any subsequent bending and to measure it. The ensuing experiment was filmed in several phases as well as photographed, permitting a recording of any progress in bending by placing the item (spoon or fork)

alongside the identical control.

Ori's technique of stroking was the same as the one he had used while bending the key: he held the handle of the spoon in his right hand and used his left hand essentially only to turn the spoon around from time to time or to place it slightly differently in the right hand. In this experiment, too, we observed that Ori shunned the use of any visible force.

After about 10 minutes the spoon had bent at its thinnest handle portion to an angle of about 45° between the spoon bill and its handle.

3rd Experiment:

Encouraged by the fact that he felt in good form, Ori put down the spoon after we had filmed and photographed the change in its curvature once more, and took hold of one of the two identical forks. I believe that I noticed the beginning of the bending process even before Ori announced that it was beginning to bend; within two or three minutes I could already confirm that bending had indeed begun. The bending process continued to grow more and more marked during the next six or seven minutes, and Ori stopped once the bending of the fork equalled that previously achieved with the spoon.

During the experiments, Yaron had been making coffee for us in the kitchen. We drank our coffee in between the various experiments.

Discussion:

Like the first series of experiments, this second group did not take place under conditions of the most rigorous controls. Nevertheless, I should like to stress the following points: Material for the experiments (both series) was furnished by the participants; it was under constant observation from the moment it was turned over to Ori. During the second series Ori confronted identical pairs of metal objects, the choice of one of each being left to him. Any substitution of materials was entirely ruled out.

Ori's hands were not examined for the presence of chemicals; on the other hand, the respective owners of the test materials did examine them after Ori's bending thereof but found no surface wetness of any other surface change. The photographs can only record the varying degrees of bending; comparing the bent objects with their unbent identical "controls" (key, fork, spoon). The filming cannot, under the actual experimental conditions, register the bending process as such; it shows, however, (a) Ori's manner of stroking and rubbing the objects; and (b) the absence of any use of visible force to bring about the bending of these rigid metal objects; the tensing of the muscles involved could not have remained hidden from the camera.

Doron and I, who were present throughout the second series of experiments, are both convinced that the observed results were not achieved fraudulently; that what they witnessed were genuine PK phenomena urgently requiring an explanation and defining an essential portion of the work of parapsychology in the nearest future.

Seer got it right

NOW THAT our first year has passed, our Premonitions Bureau project has come under review. During the last 12 months we've collected well over 100 premonitions from people who were impressed enough with their intuitions to put pen to paper.

Sad to report, however, that we are unable to offer even one as providing evidence for precognition. The majority were the product of dreams, the nature of which were startling enough or sufficiently different to make the dreamer believe that there was a psychic element involved.

Some, of course, related to personal events — i.e., premonitions that relatives or friends were going to be involved in accidents — and with such cases we have to rely on the individual who first sent the report to send us confirmation. That has not happened, so we assume that none of the premonitions has been fulfilled.

Other reports which were sent to us concerned public figures or events which we could monitor. Again, in no case has there been a premonition that has been fulfilled.

This does not surprise us. Other premonitions bureaux which have been in existence for much longer can offer only a handful of impressive cases. However, despite our lack of success, we will keep the Premonitions Bureau file open in the hope that it will record some worthwhile cases in the future.

After all, some people do apparently have the gift of prophesy and welcome the opportunity to record their premonitions with an independent bureau which can later verify their statements.

Author Guy Lyon Playfair was telling me the other day about a recent visit to Czechoslovakia. Guy, who is author of *The Cycles of Heaven*, which is now in paperback (Pan, £1.20), was discussing the effects of sunspots on the human race. It was during a peak of such solar activity that the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia.

"Right now," predicted Guy, basing his prophesy on the intense solar activity of the time, "the Russians are probably planning to invade someone else." Within a day or so the Soviets had moved into Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, Guy didn't file that predictions with us, but we are happy to accept it from the horse's mouth, as it were, and place it on record now.

Just occasionally, however, a noteworthy prediction does get recorded before the event. Back in December last year the Scottish newspaper, *Dundee Courier* and

Advertiser (December 6) carried an amusing story headlined, "Prophet didn't have a ticket." It told of the appearance of Edward Pearson, 43, at Perth Sheriff Court, charged with travelling on the Inverness to Perth train on December 4 without a ticket.

Pearson, described as "an unemployed Welsh prophet", was said to have travelled to Scotland to see the Minister of the Environment to warn him about an earthquake which would hit Glasgow in the near future.

Sheriff Harold F. Ford deferred sentence for one week, said the newspaper, for social inquiry and psychiatric reports, and Pearson was remanded in custody.

Since then, we have heard no more of the Welsh prophet nor have any newspaper accounts about him reached our notice. Which is rather odd really when you consider that three weeks later that same newspaper was carrying banner headlines declaring: "Shaken Scots tell of earthquake alarm."

The earthquake occurred on December 26 with its epicentre near Gt. G. Six families had to be evacuated from a tenement in Glasgow when a crack developed from top to ground level. The quake registered 4.5 on the Richter scale. Fortunately no one was injured.

"Earthquakes in Britain are very rare," said the newspaper. Prophets who predict them are even rarer.

Warnings ignored

"DUE TO foreseen circumstances, psychic Melenie is out of action."

So ran the story in Melenie Rider's local newspaper . . . and I have to agree that it does have its amusing side, even though Mrs Rider suffered pain and discomfort in the process.

"I suppose you could say I'm a kind of psychic social worker," she explained to the newspaper. She is consulted by people with problems and has just moved to Cirencester. But her psychic senses failed to prevent an accident. Just before her move she had three psychic warnings that something would happen but she failed to take care. As a result, she fell while carrying a chair downstairs and broke an arm.

After the accident, Melenie Ride had to cancel her appointments until February.

Some years ago, she filed several of her predictions with the British Premonitions Bureau. These are said to have included forecasts of the deaths of Archbishop Makarios, Jeremy Thorpe's wife and the Duke of Gloucester.

Listen to the stars

STEVEN HALPERN, the American musician-cum-psychologist who believes that music can have great therapeutic value (see *Alpha* interview, Issue No 4), has joined forces with one of his country's most famous psychics, Ingo Swann, to produce what is described as "an unforgettable auditory voyage into the heart of the Universe."

Called "Star Children", and available on record or cassette, it could almost be described as an interstellar disco-opera. There are some very good modern-style segments and superb interludes, though I confess it is not the sort of universe which every music lover will want to inhabit. I, for one, could very easily do without the female voice which introduces each movement.

I found Steven's "Hear to Eternity" a better listen, with its almost monotonous repetitions strangely soothing. It's certainly an antidote to a lot of the sounds we have to tolerate today.

Grave humour?

LATEST news of the Spiritualists' National Union is that the Fraud Squad is investigating matters involving it. What is not clear, at the moment, is whether the police interest has any connection with the visit of the Elizaldes — the psychic surgeons who were accused by BBC TV of being fraudulent (*Alpha*, issue No. 4) or whether other matters are being looked at.

The SNU has had more than its

fair share of problems over the years but, under its president Gordon Higginson, it continues to survive.

But what do the SNU's early pioneers think of its present activities as they watch from their new vantage point in the spirit world? Scots medium — well, he was born in Ireland, but he now lives in Glasgow — Albert Best was telling me the other day about a visit he paid to Stansted, the SNU's Essex headquarters which was given to the union by Arthur Findlay, author of several outstanding Spiritualist books.

Albert visited Findlay's grave in the nearby churchyard, together with a couple of friends. It was a peaceful bright afternoon in July, last year, as they stood looking at the spot where Findlay's earthly remains were buried.

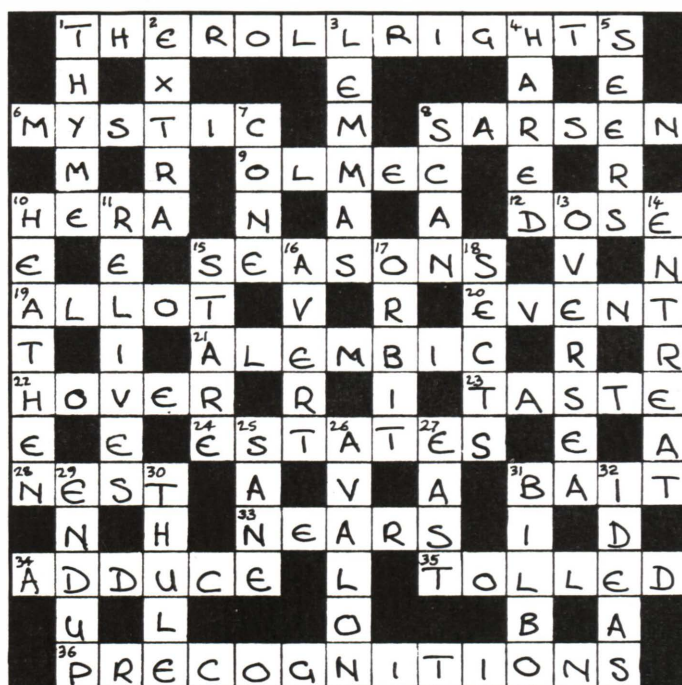
"Have you anything to say, Arthur, about Stansted?" Albert enquired — which, if you are a medium and used to communicating with spirits, is a not unreasonable question to ask of the dead.

Albert got no verbal reply, but suddenly and inexplicably a huge branch crashed down from a tree just behind the grave. I leave you to interpret the message — if such it was — of that particular incident.

Crossword winners

The winner of crossword No. 1 was Pamela Smith, Herne Bay, Kent and of No. 2, Mrs E. M. Trenchard, Falmouth, Cornwall.

Solutions to crossword No. 2



Beyond the limits of science

Why, after more than a century of psychical research and the accumulated personal testimony of thousands who have experienced paranormal phenomena, has science not provided confirmation or explanation? Graham Lawrence offers an answer.

IT IS becoming increasingly recognised, at least by those open-minded enough to think about it, that there are areas of knowledge and certain possibilities that are simply not determinable by scientific proof in the classical sense. To demonstrate the proof of a proposition requires not only repeatability of the experiment but also a closed environment where all the variables are under control.

Let us take psychokinesis: the apparent influence of mind on matter. This can be demonstrated, usually unconvincingly, by a large number of statistics about a small number of possibilities (the flip of a coin, the rolling of dice).

However, there are individuals who claim to be able to select and disperse a cloud in the sky by the power of their mind. Now this is not something that can be established beyond doubt scientifically. No matter how many previously selected clouds in cloudy or otherwise clear skies blow apart in minutes, the Earth's atmosphere is not a sufficiently closed system to exclude alternative explanations of cloud and air movements.

If the individual concerned had demonstrated psychokinesis in the laboratory, then by implication he *could* be responsible for a cloud's dispersal — but implication is not proof. The recognition of that fact, however, does not dismiss the ability to disperse clouds as a possible feature of reality; and so, although it is the responsibility of science, in the widest sense of the word, eventually to explain absolutely everything, the methods of scientific proof, far from being the ultimate measure of reliability, can be seen to have rather serious limitations.

Can you imagine trying to prove that something had been cursed? Perhaps you could demonstrate it beyond fairly reasonable doubt, but *prove* it or arrange it so that the situation is so controlled that you could exclude any possible alternative explanation (such as a series of unlucky accidents)?

There has been some speculation (e.g. in *Creatures of the Outer Edge* by Jerome Clark and Loren Coleman, Warner, New York, 1978) that reports of UFOs and of monsters like the Yeti of the Himalayas and North America's Sasquatch (or "Bigfoot") — even England's elusive Surrey puma — are all, in some strange way, crystallisations, both physical and non-physical, of projections from the racial unconscious of man's dreams and preoccupations; a kind of mass nightmare.

This is fascinating, but it is hardly susceptible to proof in any meaningful way. It could no more be "pinned down" as *the* authentic explanation than the dreams of an individual psychotic could be chopped up under a microscope. However, the reports are still made, and there still has to be an explanation — or several. (The cynic will say yes, several — such as bears, aeroplanes, lies and hallucinations.)

UFOs and monsters — crystallisations from the racial unconscious?

Could you show how it could be proved that a precognitive dream had taken place? If you dreamed that a famous department store caught fire, and told somebody about it, and then the fire happened the next day — do you think that would be proof? But that sort of thing has happened again and again. The hard-line sceptic will say that millions of people dream about millions of things all the time, and some of them are bound to happen. It's just statistics and coincidence. Every single night there are probably some people who dream about shops catching fire, and all the other dreams mean nothing, they merely rule out precognition as a valid explanation for one single dream.

Now if you have, or someone close to you has had, one or more precognitive dreams, you know perfectly well that the accuracy and the meaningful impact of the dream make it a qualitatively different experience from any old dream, and that the statistical "explanation" is so absurd it is virtually beneath contempt; but of course the sceptic will respond that this is only your belief and that if you want to introduce anything at all that is in conflict with any other observable aspect of the universe, the burden of proof must really be on you. At this point you can either shrug and feel sorry for him, or climb up the wall screaming, depending upon the effect on you of unshakeable dogmatism.

The mystical experience is a direct perception of eternal being, apparently, which may be described by the perceiver as "union with God" or as "a sense of oneness with all things", including the loss of the sense of having an ego or personality that is separate from the rest of the universe. This has been written about by

hundreds of people for centuries, and it has deep and indisputable meaning for everyone who has the experience; but subjective validity is not objective proof, and so there are many people who think that, like an LSD "trip", the mystical experience is a few chemicals in the brain and has as much validity as a migraine.

The limitations of scientific proof apply particularly to the examination of trance phenomena, either mediumistic or hypnotic. When a medium speaks of previously unknown facts with a different voice, what possible way could there be of absolutely determining whether she was possessed by a departed spirit or was simply subject to the psychological phenomenon of secondary personality and was telepathically taking the information from someone present or already knew it subconsciously? Even if information was obtained that was apparently previously known only to someone newly deceased, this could not be held to be proof of spirit possession, or even of life after death.

Considering the theories of T.C. Lethbridge — including the idea that thought is a field phenomenon and a ghost is a "recording" on the environment — the information could be theorised to still exist for some time after the death of the man, and the medium could have had the ability to "plug in" to it somehow. Once again we seem to be beyond proof and in the area of opinion; of which theory — or belief — seems most reasonable to you.

In hypnotic trance, literally thousands of people in the last two decades have been regressed beyond birth and given descriptions of previous lives — apparently. To many people, this has demonstrated proof of reincarnation. However, although it may constitute *evidence for* reincarnation, this is very different from proof, and reincarnation is really only the most available and superficial explanation.

Again, any information provided in trance could possibly be obtained from a "consciousness field", which could be an essentially dead phenomenon. There is the staggering ability of the mind to elaborate and fantasise on flimsy ideas — look at how you dream. There is also the fact that people in trance can be projected forward into the future instead of regressed, and they give a very convincing portrayal of themselves as older people. In fairness I must point out that they are, however, hazy on the "future history" of the world, or anything outside their own (and their families') lives, whereas confirmable

historical facts can apparently be obtained in some cases by regressed subjects.

I find most fascinating of all the case which is the subject of a book called *Lives to Remember* by Peter Underwood and Leonard Wilder (Robert Hale, London, 1975), in which the same subject was hypnotically "regressed" on two occasions, 16 years apart. On the first occasion, details of three separate "lives" were recorded. On the second, only one of

A lot of people expect a breakthrough in parapsychology and UFOs . . .

the lives was recalled in the same way; one of the lives was apparently completely "unobtainable" or "forgotten", and the third life was recalled but the details differed seriously and significantly from the first occasion. One of each. You could really take your pick of explanations and speculations in a case like this. To me it is the most significant because it appears to demonstrate a central opinion of mine; that the phenomena of consciousness must *not* ever be taken at face value. They are real, but essentially untrustworthy. (Perhaps they are all directed by capricious, non-physical "demons" to whom we are nothing but playthings; they would never provide proof of their existence because their very nature must be so alien to ours that their motives are not "casual" or goal-directed like ours, and are perhaps even beyond our capacity to understand . . . but this is a far from fruitful line of speculation. That way lies nothing but superstition and fear and paranoia.)

What really started to crystallise this opinion in my mind — never to trust the most obvious explanation for certain "fringe" phenomena — was reading about an apparent series of messages from a spirit received by a medium, Mrs Blanche Cooper, and recorded by Dr S. G. Soal at London University in 1921-22. The spirit said he was Gordon Davis, boyhood friend of Soal, and described incidents from their schooldays. So far we could have a fairly straightforward case of telepathy, Mrs Cooper getting the information from Soal's mind.

Then "Davis" expressed concern for his wife and child; he wanted Soal to get a message to them. However, he was unable to give the address. Nevertheless, he gave various details about the house, most of them obscure, such as that the letter E was significant somehow, and the house was not on a proper street but one "like half a street". He also described things inside the

house, including pictures, candlesticks, and a black bird on the piano. Soal felt, of course, that if these details could be confirmed, he would have evidence for survival after death.

He found the house three years later in Southend, Essex. It was in a row of houses facing the sea — "half a street" — on Eastern Esplanade — the letter E. All of the obscure clues fell into place. Inside the house was everything described, including the black figure of a bird sitting on the piano. Every detail communicated in the seances was correct . . . except one. Davis *was still alive*, and he was living there. Furthermore, he had *not* been living in Southend three years previously and he had not then owned all the items described; they had been collected over a period of time in a variety of situations.

Somehow, the medium seems to have filtered information out of the mind of a living man, not only about his past, but about possessions he would have and a place in which he would live in the future. How? Why? Simple face-value notions of telepathy and life after death really fall apart when confronted with such a case.

After that I came across *Life After Death* (Bantam, New York, 1975), the book by Dr Raymond Moody which describes the common characteristics of the experiences of patients who "died" and were resuscitated in hospital. Hundreds of people reported floating above their bodies, seeing deceased relatives waiting to help them over to "the other side", and then meeting a "being of light" who lovingly and forgivingly showed them a review of their life. It all sounded wonderful. So individual human lives really did have destiny and meaning after all. However, I was then told by a friend about a woman known to him who, while ill in hospital, had a very similar experience. She had left her body and floated outside the hospital, where she experienced a powerful light from above, which she is convinced was the presence of God. At the same time she was surrounded by people, not deceased relatives, but the *living members of her church* — which does *not* believe in any kind of detachable soul that can survive the death of the physical body. They weren't really there, of course, and they didn't know anything about it.

I could not help thinking of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which is read over the dying man to warn him not to be fooled by the many and various creations of his own consciousness so that he is not distracted from the pure light of the Absolute.

There is a valuable lesson here; don't stop thinking about the evidence before you've done enough research. This is the trap a lot of people fall into when reading a book like Lyall Watson's *Supernature*. They start walking around with a whole bunch of opinions about plant sensitivity, for example, without bothering to find out that Cleve Backster's lie-detector experiments have been repeated again and again, under more controlled conditions, and that no one else gets any reaction at all

from the wired-up plants.

I have this awful feeling that although a lot of people expect some kind of "breakthrough" in the fields of parapsychology and UFOs — which may be the same field — that in a hundred years time we will just have another 100 years behind us of boring statistics and inexplicably gifted people who are dismissed as frauds, and the "scientific establishment" will have perhaps a slightly

. . . but in 100 years from now we will probably have got precisely nowhere.

higher percentage of "ESP believers", but ESP will have got precisely nowhere.

It appears from the nature of the UFO phenomenon that there won't be any "saucers" landing on the White House lawn, or in any laboratories, so I can imagine the reports still coming in after 130 years, and no results other than a few sociologists' books on the collective hysteria of the technological society, yet more out-of-focus photographs and pseudo-religious groups expecting a Landing — but always next year.

Should we give up? Is our only hope to abandon "science" and "proof" and create a deluded and superstitious — rather than religious — society, with everyone "exploring their own consciousness" and getting more and more involved in fantasies from nowhere but their own subconscious, and further and further away from coping with "real" life? No, I hardly think so.

The universe of Scientific Man is fascinating but basically meaningless; the *essential nature* of this universe is *staggeringly* different if, for example, life after death and/or reincarnation are facts and not opinions. Personally, I am prepared to speculate that when a breakthrough concerning the nature of consciousness does happen, it will be by way of some unexpected field such as subatomic physics; that it is likely to be too abstrusely mathematical for the ordinary man to appreciate; that it may be held to validate a sort of amoral mystical pantheism; and that it will have no power at all over beliefs in departed or reincarnated spirits or Divine Judgment or the Second Coming.

Our questions may never be answered; but the evidence *must* be examined *even where the phenomenon in discussion can never be susceptible to proof*, because of the *importance* for man, as a species and as an individual, of the implications of the evidence.

The enigma of Geraldine Cummins

How convincing are the automatic writing scripts produced through the hand of the famous Irish medium? Leslie Price examines the evidence.

IN A recent article ("Are you at risk?" *Alpha* No 5, Nov/Dec 1979), I noted that the enquirer could be deceived about mediumship and Spiritualism. Though the problem of fraud was minor in Britain, it did exist. I wrote of "the case of Geraldine Cummins who transmitted the important *Swan on a Black Sea* scripts. Few English researchers doubted her integrity, but Professor E.R. Dodds, who died this year, was not convinced of this. Dodds was Irish, as was Miss Cummins; they first met in the First World War in Dublin. Over the years, she spoke more candidly to her compatriot about where some of her material derived. She was a cataloguer at the National Library of Ireland, with exceptional opportunity for locating obscure data. (See E.R. Dodds *Missing Persons*, Oxford, 1977)."

The weekly Spiritualist newspaper *Psychic News* responded hostilely to this (December 1). "Leslie's attack on famous automatist Geraldine Cummins is shameful," wrote editor Maurice Barbanell. "He states she was a cataloguer at the National Library of Ireland 'with exceptional opportunity for locating obscure data.' He would not have dared to imply fraud against this wonderful medium if she were still on earth."

It will be noted that the mainly Spiritualist readership of PN was not told that I had a published source, *Missing Persons*, and a by no means negligible witness — Dodds. In this further article, however, I want not only to discuss Dodds' evidence in more detail, but also to present some more of the data which tend to be missed out in partisan publications, and which illustrate the complexity of mediumship. I believe that it is possible for a person to be a wonderful medium and yet fall below full truthfulness at times.

Miss Cummins herself liked to mention Dodds as one of her distinguished investigators. Recalling her Dublin apprenticeship with another gifted sensitive, Mrs Hester Dowden, she wrote: "Among those who attended our sittings was a young man back from the Serbian front, Mr E.R. Dodds, later Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University and finally in 1961-2 President of the Society for Psychical Research (the SPR). His was an extremely wholesome sceptical influence. He has a keen sense of humour and youthful though he was then, did not mind Hester calling him 'the Universal Question Mark'" (*Swan on a Black Sea*, p. 151.).

When Dodds wrote his memoirs, he took the title "Universal Question Mark" for the chapter on psychical research. Dodds had no difficulty accepting telepathy and even physical phenomena, but he balked at survival of death, and wrote a famous paper for the SPR *Proceedings* putting the case against it. This did not stop him participating in the Mrs Lewis case (SPR *Proceedings*, 1939) which through Mrs Gladys Osborne Leonard's mediumship provided important evidence for survival. He was no belligerent or ignorant opponent of mediumship.

His discussion of Geraldine Cummins should be read in the original (p. 106-7). As *Missing Persons* won a literary prize, this is not a tedious task. Speaking of her sittings, Dodds says ". . . in the presence of a bereaved sitter the 'communicator' would sometimes, though rarely, produce veridical information which was outside the sitter's conscious knowledge. The task of verification was usually discharged by Geraldine, who was well placed for it since she worked as a cataloguer at the National Library of Ireland. Her verifications were on some occasions so exact and apt that in moods of scepticism I could not help wondering whether some of this research might not have been done in advance of the sitting."

Dodds continues: "I once ventured to tax her with having done just this. She denied it, but then added 'However, suppose I did now and again "open up the channels for communication" in the way you suggest, would it not have been worth it for the sake of bringing reassurance and consolation to a distressed mother or widow?'. It was a very Irish answer: we have always, as a nation, been inclined to rate human kindness above exact veracity."

These remarks by Dodds are not entirely satisfactory. It is not clear when the conversation took place, in London or Dublin, or whether he took notes at the time. Did he misunderstand Miss Cummins' meaning? After 1923 it was Miss E.B. Gibbes, a friend and co-worker of Miss Cummins who verified evidence, as Miss Cummins recalled in her autobiography, *Unseen Adventures* (p. 39). But Dodds cannot be disregarded either. Precisely because she was a friend of his for over 50 years, his impression of her and his evident distrust of her is significant. Dodds was noted for his meticulousness.

"The last time I saw her," Dodds recalled, "shortly before her death, she

confided in me that in the war period she had from a sense of duty undertaken the dangerous work of a British agent in Ireland, exploiting her 'innocent' status as a 'non-political' medium to worm out the intentions of the pro-German IRA faction. I believed her: the courage, the deviousness, and the necessary skill in 'fishing' were all of them in character." Perhaps more information about this work will be made available one day; it is a moot point whether we should welcome a talent for it in a medium!

Was Geraldine devious? We must await more witnesses before a final verdict may be reached. It is all very well *Psychic News* saying that this or that statement would not be made while a medium was alive, but there are good reasons for this, independent of the actual strength of the evidence. The English libel law as the Blunt affair has reminded us, and as Spiritualist newspapers themselves found when dealing with William Roy (a medium who eventually claimed he was fraudulent in the *Sunday Pictorial*), protects the guilty, sometimes more than the innocent. Again, discerning people, including psychical researchers and Spiritualists, prefer not to quarrel with others. Miss Cummins moved in polite society, and appeared to be of a shy, retiring nature. She eventually became semi-canonised, and criticism of her could (and still can) be portrayed as indecent.

But as we shall see, there is some more evidence of, at the least, selective presentation of facts beyond the acceptable. To psychical researchers, the series of scripts received by Miss Cummins and published as *Swan on a Black Sea* is her most interesting work. The supposed communicator is Mrs Willett (pseudonym for Mrs Charles Coombe-Tennant), who had been one of the SPR mediums who in life had provided evidence in the famous "Cross-Correspondences". Mrs Willett's sons, Alexander and Henry Coombe-Tennant, asked Dodds to report privately on these scripts. He told them there was internal evidence pointing in the direction of conscious or unconscious fraud, though as his report was private and unpublished its value is reduced.

Another SPR researcher, Mary Rose Barrington, asked "How much could Miss Cummins have known?" (SPR *Journal*, June 1966). Miss Barrington pointed out that quite a lot of information about "Miss Willett" had been published, and that there was a possibility of unpublished data also reaching the medium.

Other SPR leaders, like Professor C.D. Broad and Dr R.H. Thouless, were more positive about *Swan*. The scripts do indeed present a vivid portrait of the character of "Miss Willett", before and after death. Anyone familiar with the psychic scene knows that information about its personalities does seep into the most unexpected quarters, and mediums and researchers learn things from and about each other despite supposedly rigorous security precautions. But I can't help believing in the Willett communicator in those scripts, despite the complexities of mediumship in general and of Miss Cummins in particular!

More doubtful to me are the books which made Miss Cummins' reputation and which supposedly describe the development of the early Christian Church: *The Scripts of Cleophas* and its sequels. As I pointed out in my *Alpha* article "Are you at risk?", there are many psychic accounts of those times which heartily contradict each other, so in themselves the *Scripts* are not unusual. What is surprising is the oblivion which has fallen on published criticism of them, an oblivion which the medium encouraged. The Spiritualist view is that the scripts are paranormal and contain authentic historical material. Miss Cummins, and until her death in 1951 Miss Gibbes, wrote many articles in support of this view.

The scripts were received in trance by Miss Cummins, sometimes in the presence of distinguished churchmen, scholars and psychical researchers. They show knowledge of early Christian times that the medium could not know. At least three Christian experts, Dr W. O. E. Oesterley, Professor E.P. Paterson and Professor David Morrison, endorsed them. On the one hand, there is no proof that Jesus ever existed (one in the eye for the Christians), but on the other hand, Spiritualists have information about him which the Bible does not give (another one in the eye!)

To this may be added the interesting testimony attributed to the Hon Mrs Clive Behrens, only daughter of the first Lord Rothschild, that, as Geraldine Cummins reports in *Unseen Adventures*, "They seemed to her, she told me, to be steeped in the Jewish traditions, to present the background and the spirit of the people at that particular period in their manner, a manner that, she believed, could not be expressed by a Gentile who was a foreigner, and, therefore, without hereditary knowledge or feeling for the inner self of the Jewish nation" (p. 111).

Similarly, in a late lecture, "From the Superconscious" (*Light*, Summer 1968), Miss Cummins reports that she had received a letter in 1967 from Signe Toksvig, (editor of *Swan on a Black Sea*) who had been in Athens. "She wrote that she had with her the second published volume of my *Cleophas Scripts*, *Paul in Athens*; and she was deeply impressed by the accuracy of the descriptions of the landscapes of Athens and other places where she stayed, as printed in this book." Miss Cummins adds that she has never

visited or read about Athens and its surroundings.

It sounds convincing, but only because the case against is never put in the articles and books in question. Let us call back some of the witnesses from the other side of the case. The early *Scripts of Cleophas* were sometimes received in the presence of Frederick Bligh Bond, the ecclesiastical architect whose excavations at Glastonbury were accompanied by psychic encouragement. But Bond had disagreements with Miss Cummins, and there was a notable legal case in 1926 which declared copyright to rest with the medium, not with the alleged sitter. The unedifying dispute revived when the first volume of the scripts were published in 1928. The medium was backed by much of the Spiritualist establishment, though interestingly enough, Hannen Swaffer defended Bond's motives.

Vital role

Although Miss Cummins briefly describes the law case in *Unseen Adventures*, (p. 112) and acknowledges that Bond had been present at some sittings, there is reason to believe that his role in the genesis of the scripts was somewhat greater. He was able to quote in *Psychic Research* (the journal of the American SPR, which he was then editing) script utterances which ascribed to him a vital role in their reception. (About the same time, he was also receiving the "Philip" early Christian messages through Hester Dowden — such material was a special interest of his.)

Bond suggested that the quality had deteriorated after his break with Miss Cummins; this was disputed. What is clear is that few readers realise the role of the complex, tortured Bond, and they might reconsider their enthusiasm if they did.

In her memoir, Miss Cummins twice states that Walter Franklin Prince witnessed the production of the scripts (p. 83, 110). Prince was research officer of America's Boston SPR, and served a term as London SPR president. His speciality was the analysis and unravelling of psychic material. He believed in survival, served for many years as an Episcopalian minister and counsellor, and wrote a classic study of the Patience Worth case in which historical and archaic materials were produced through a St Louis lady, Mrs Curran. Though Miss Cummins cites him as witnessing her writing, she never reveals that this uniquely qualified parapsychologist had published a critical account of its evidentiality. Was this forgetfulness, ignorance or deviousness?

Unfortunately, Prince made his analysis hurriedly and confined himself to part of the material (possibly because of the legal dispute with Bond), but he did have the advantage of both the published version and what seems to have been an unedited typescript. He appears to have entered the discussion because others were claiming the scripts as history.

While believing in the honesty of the medium, Prince was unable to endorse the accuracy of the work. He gave 36

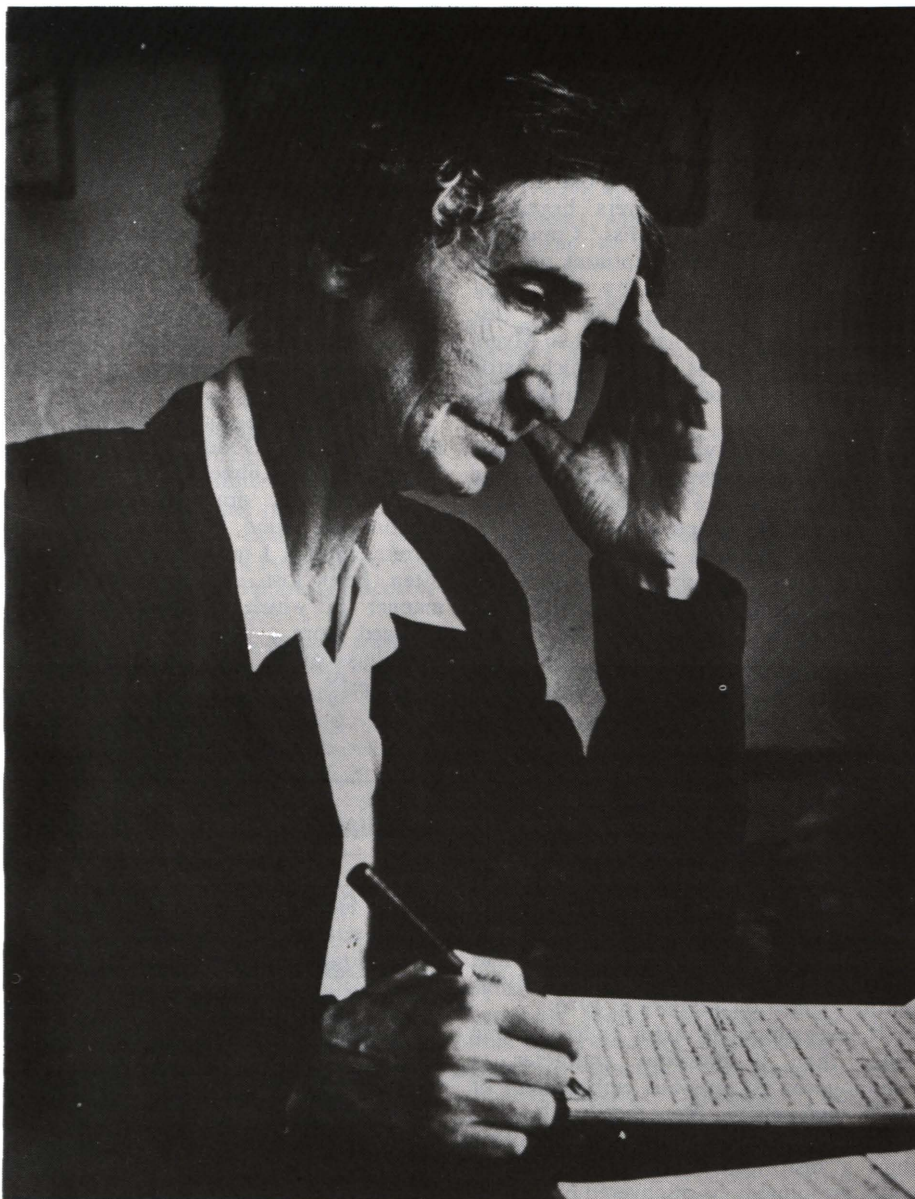
comments on individual passages that seemed to be anachronistic, unlikely, or suggestive of a modern writer. "There are" he observed "a host of locutions of the sort which are never seen in historical documents but which crop out betrayingly in forgeries — conscious and subconscious — and which result from an effort to talk as it seems to the composer as people of Bible times and lands should talk, with a gravitation towards locutions of the King James Bible, and the addition of verbal forms which *sound* old, but which never were on land or sea." ("Tests for Historicity" in *Bulletin*, Boston SPR, No X, April 1929).

Prince also noted the attention given to female characters in the scripts, and this suggested to him that only a woman could have composed the *Scripts of Cleophas*. He was not, of course, greatly impressed by the fact that they were written quickly in trance — this simply illustrates the powers of the subconscious mind. One might add that each night when we sleep, our minds effortlessly spin out the most remarkable dramas. There is nothing paranormal about it, except in the sense that all consciousness is paranormal. Prince had seen the remarkable capacities of the mind in his studies of the Patience Worth case (which also included a life of Christ, *The Sorry Tale*, written through the sensitive). But whereas the generally favourable remarks of Prince on that sensitive — Mrs Curran — entered the storehouse of handy pro-Spiritualist quotations, his analysis of Geraldine Cummins has been forgotten.

From the theological side, G.W. Butterworth devoted a chapter of his book *Spiritualism and Religion* (SPCK 1944) to the scripts. This is an important book which has probably been neglected because the author did not approve of Spiritualism, though he recognised that there was a psychic element in religion. Butterworth was not conservative, having translated the theologian Origen who was notably unorthodox, and he accepted the findings of criticism about the mixed origins of the biblical books.

Like Prince, he realised that the scripts were an expansion of the Acts of the Apostles, and that they frequently echoed the 1611 Bible. Their theological outlook, he found to be much too "orthodox" for New Testament times; in particular, they used language about the Trinity which only developed later. Early Christian literature abounded in quotations from the Jewish Bible, the Old Testament. "Yet in these three volumes of *Scripts*, filling well nigh 700 pages of print, I have failed to discover a single quotation from or specific allusion to the Old Testament." (p. 42)

Prince and Butterworth independently dismiss the suggestion that the use of the term "archon" in the scripts is evidential. This word ("ruler") is frequent in the Greek New Testament. They comment, as did the scripts' editors, on the melodramatic emphasis on violence and phenomena, found in the *Cleophas* material. But this is a common feature of material from the subconscious. Moreover,



Geraldine Cummins — criticism of her "could and can still be portrayed as indecent".

Geraldine, as a child of seven, loved to act Shakesperian ghost and murder scenes (as she recalls in *Unseen Adventures* p. 17), and these interests evidently remain.

Space prevents me from quoting more than a fraction of the cumulative case built up by Prince and Butterworth, whose material should be reprinted somewhere. No one, I think, should claim the scripts are historical without reading these critiques. It is possible that they may have prompted replies from Spiritualist journals when they first appeared (I'd be grateful for references), but since then — silence. And Miss Cummins, as I have indicated, not only did not cite these critiques in her apologies, but she commandeered Prince's name in her retinue of admirers!

A sidelight on this is the attitude of the Society for Psychical Research. When the first volume of the scripts appeared, it was reviewed by Herbert Thurston, the great Jesuit researcher (*SPR Journal*, December 1928). Though Thurston accepted the medium's good faith, he was sceptical about the scripts' value. He wondered why the editors had not provided more evidence of their detailed examination, and even 50

years later it would be useful to have the full picture of what these scholars (Oesterley, et al.) wrote and thought.

Thurston was made especially sceptical because, as part of his researches into the phenomena of holy persons, he had spent much time studying the revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerich, a German visionary. (His findings were reprinted in his posthumous collection of papers, *Surprising Mystics*.)

Sister Emmerich claimed that during his public life Jesus Christ had sailed on a missionary tour to Cyprus, and had visited Egypt and the Tigris. Curiously, the script editors cited Emmerich as a parallel to Miss Cummins, but Thurston was well-qualified to say that "There is in most of these cases a strange mixture of truth and fiction, the fiction predominating, and we can trust nothing as veridical until we understand more of the processes of subliminal telepathy."

This review appears to have caused protest, though I have been unable to locate the precise channels it took. Most unusually the SPR permitted a second review to appear, (*SPR Journal*, May 1929)

written by Canon H. Bickersteth Ottley, which took a lyrically enthusiastic line. Something of the SPR's difficulty can be seen by the fact that an evidential ouija sitting report by Mrs Cooper (pseudonym) for which Miss Cummins was the medium, appeared in the same issue, immediately preceding Ottley. But in the October issue, Mrs Sidgwick called attention to the Prince report in the Boston SPR bulletin.

A later volume of *Cleophas* scripts, *After Pentecost*, was reviewed by a Rational scholar, A.D. Howell Smith (*SPR Journal*, May 1944). He concluded "While *Cleophas* betrays a surprising acquaintance with the Authorised Version of the English Bible, his theological thinking and phrasing are more suited to a Gnostic of the second century A.D. than to a Jew of the first."

Until 1949, the *SPR Journal* was nominally private and not available to the public, so there is some excuse for the general neglect of its contents by authors discussing the *Cleophas* case.

In 1966, the SPR encountered a further difficulty involving Miss Cummins. J.R. Henderson had discovered a similarity between certain passages written by the explorer Col. Fawcett in *The Occult Review* before his death, and one of the scripts received by Geraldine Cummins and included in her book *The Fate of Colonel Fawcett*. Because of an administrative oversight, the Henderson findings were pigeonholed en route to the *Journal*, and it was left to the grapevine to convey the discovery to Simeon Edmunds, who was permitted to make it public (*SPR Journal*, March 1966) precisely when *Swan on a Black Sea* was being welcomed. Edmunds had real journalistic gifts but he made this incident sound more sinister than it was.

All this should be sufficient to show that there is a strong case against the *Scripts of Cleophas*, and against the Cummins automatic writings in general. Setting this beside the much better publicised case for, we are perhaps not in a position to dismiss the *Cleophas* material as valueless. Some other Cummins' productions remain impressive.

It is interesting to note the verdict of Wellesley Tudor Pole, the sensitive who transmitted the classic *Private Dowding* and who published psychic impressions of early Christianity himself. In letters to Rosamond Lehmann just published (*My dear Alexias*, Spearman, Jersey, 1979), Pole wrote:

"Now all messages via mediums have perforce to come down *through* astral realms: these realms are fluid, a mere breath of etheric air at once distrubs this fluid condition and causes distortion and hence misinterpretation. If you look at yourself, for instance, in a clear pool of water the reflection can be quite accurate. But so soon as the water in the pool is disturbed, your reflection becomes disturbed also, and out of focus. Rarely nowadays is there any real serenity and stillness within these astral fluidic states. I respect G. Cummins, but much of her automatic writing has been subject to the conditions I have tried to outline above."

(p. 50)

Later Pole wrote: "I agree that Geraldine Cummins has produced a great deal of very real value. What is absent is discrimination. She will live on through her best work, as should be the case with us all." (p. 114)

Among that work many would place the scripts from Ambrose Pratt, the Australian writer, which are included in Professor Raynor Johnson's *The Light and the Gate* (1964), and which led him to write an exposition of the philosophy of Imaginism which had been developed by Douglas Fawcett. This is my favourite psychic book, and the works of Raynor Johnson crystallised my interest in this field in 1964. But it is a pity that the Johnsons had met Miss Cummins, and that she had a more than slight interest in Fawcett's philosophy. As with the "Willett" scripts, however, I believe there really was a communicator, and if there was any normal leakage of information this may have helped lubricate the psychic channels.

There is, however, one further Cummins complication which we have to face. It is one of the central conundrums of Spiritualism, and it is the question of her guides. We have a valuable paper on this: "The Controls of Geraldine Cummins", written by her collaborator Miss Gibbes, published in *Psychic Science*, October 1936, and later re-issued as a pamphlet. She argues that the controls — trance entities which act as masters of ceremonies during sittings — are separate from each other and from the automatist.

"So far as I know," reports Miss Gibbes, "Miss Cummins has only two guides or controls, Astor, a Greek, who states that he lived at the time of Plotinus, and Silenio, who purports to be an early Christian." (p. 206)

Astor was the original control, and was first described, in Hester Dowden's *Voices from the Void* (1919), as displaying precognitive powers. But his best-known role, in later Cummins work, was to open the sitting. Communicators would speak of him as a separate entity: "I have come at the call of the white-robed man" reported one, Nem (sic) Cooper. "A curious person, very strange in appearance". Astor claimed to be a pupil of an unknown teacher, Phylloxos, who flourished in the time of the mystical philosopher Plotinus (AD 205-270). But he could be arrogant and discourteous, and most unphilosophical!

In 1925, another guide, Silenio, began to write. He too made large claims: "Many communications are faulty through the ignorance of communicators. I, Silenio, will teach them what I know so that the medium shall catch more than the echo of their thought" (p. 210). But generally, he was much meeker than Astor. The same month Miss Gibbes went to Glastonbury, and she may have picked up early church influences there. (There is no mention of Bligh Bond in the article here or later.) In April appeared "The Messenger", who in May was disclosed to be the agent of one Cleophas. Thus the *Scripts of Cleophas* got under way.

But Astor rather despised the Christian communicators, and at times there was squabbling between Astor and the Silenio party. Astor even attributed a serious illness of the medium to the Cleophas group. "They brought with them old jealousies, old hates, age-long battles" (p. 225). When F.W.H. Myers began to communicate through Miss Cummins, Astor was likewise contemptuous of "the shallow statements made by this young soul", but, explains Miss Gibbes, "this attitude subsequently changed when Myers proceeded to write his books, which Astor calculated would bring him considerable credit" (p. 222).

Silenio in due course identified himself with Phylologos mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Romans 16, 5. He had been a slave who abjured the gospel to save his life in persecution. Because he had wished to return and tell the story of those who had remained true in the early church, he had been permitted to play a role in the Cleophas scripts. Silenio also told Miss Cummins that she had been linked with "The Country under Wave" . . . that is, Atlantis.

Are these entities spirits? Since Astor claimed to be a Neo-Platonist philosopher, it seemed useful to seek the views of a specialist in Neo-Platonism. Such a person was known to Miss Cummins. It is none other than E.R. Dodds, who published an anthology of Neo-Platonist passages in 1923, and was probably the leading UK expert on that era. I wrote to him privately, and he replied on January 8, 1976:

"I never supposed 'Astor' to be anything other than a fictitious character (a conscious or unconscious embodiment of GC's 'anti-self?'). Nor did I take *The Scripts of Cleophas* to be anything other than a historical novel, whose sources could presumably be discovered by anyone with sufficient knowledge and patience. It is a relevant fact that before turning over to automatism GC had tried her hand at writing novels and plays under her own name. These were not a success, but Cleophas sold better. I should guess that both came from the same 'pre-conscious' layer of the mind and provided alternative outlets for her creative imagination."

What would be interesting to know is whether Astor appeared before Dodds met Geraldine, for Dodds himself was unsympathetic to Christianity, and it is quite a coincidence that she should have a guide precisely from the era in which he specialised. As for GC's own religious views, she was officially a Protestant Christian. But in her memoirs, she noted: "I am not proud of the Cleophas Series, as I feel such writings are not of me, are foreign in character to my Celtic, racial self. Lastly, because of his reactionary remarks about women, I disliked St Paul. Why then was I compelled against my will and prejudices to write about him in such laudatory terms?" (p. 111)

Later in life Miss Cummins herself began to write differently of Astor while in trance. "Mrs Willett", communicating in 1959 as part of the *Swan* scripts, spoke of

"GC's subliminal mind, which is called Astor" (p. 133). And Ambrose Pratt, in *The Light and the Gate*, wrote through her that Astor "is both a secondary personality of Miss Cummins, and an individual who once lived on earth." (p. 141) There we may have it. In the serial consciousness expounded by Edwin Butler and others, it may be that past personalities of Miss Cummins still had considerable autonomy, even though they were part of the medium's psyche. Would it also be surprising to discover that both Dodds and Miss Cummins had lived in the late classical world?

This brings us back to the fraud accusations of Dodds with which we began. Let Miss Gibbes have the last word:

"As regards dramatisation by the subconscious mind, Miss Cummins is no actress, though I must admit that I have often been lost in admiration of the manner in which she has successfully emerged from a tight corner in meeting questions of a difficult and abstruse character!"

**Alpha invited Anne Dooley,
author of
"Every Wall a Door"
and a friend of
Geraldine Cummins,
to reply to
Leslie Price's contribution.**

LESLIE PRICE, a young man self-burdened with an irrational mission to warn "Christians and non-Christians to steer clear of the psychic field", already stands publicly condemned in having selected Geraldine Cummins as a target for base and baseless strictures. I heartily agree with Maurice Barbanell's view that Price would not have dared to imply fraud against this famous and much-researched medium if she were still on earth.

His case primarily rests upon three misleading inferences quoted in both his earlier and second article:

1. That others unnamed besides Prof Dodds "doubted her integrity".

2. That Dodds was specially favoured in being told about Geraldine's library job.

3. That over the years she had indicated to him that "some of her material derived from the fact that she had been a cataloguer at the National Library of Ireland with exceptional opportunity for locating obscure data.

Geraldine in her lifetime never sought to hide any facts about her youthful library job — or, in deed, any other major facts relating to her psychic researches and transmitted writings over many years.

In her sparkling biography *Unseen Adventures*, (pp27/28) she tells us: "During March 1918 I was living in Mrs

Dowden's house in Dublin and working in the National Library in place of a man who had gone to the war."

Later, in her masterpiece of survival research evidence, *Swan on a Black Sea* (p. 151) she relates the nature of her youthful researches: "By day I had a small job in the vaults of the National Library, where I was peacefully occupied in cataloguing eighteenth-century sermons of inordinate length."

She also casually confirms that among those who attended Hester's evening "sittings" in her home was "a young man back from the Serbian front, Mr E.R. Dodds, who didn't mind Hester dubbing him 'the Universal Question Mark'."

It was also under Hester's expert tuition that Geraldine began her psychic training. She comments: "At first I was very sceptical as on that ouija board there were many statements made obviously traceable to my subconscious mind."

By 1923 Geraldine was already engaged in literary journalism in London, where in the same year she met E. Beatrice Gibbes who became a lifelong friend and mentor. Characteristically, Price fails to mention that over the ensuing period of 20 years Geraldine's mediumship and serious studies in psychical research — including the Cleophas Scripts volumes — were supervised by this expert.

Geraldine has told us in her autobiography (pp 39/40): "Representatives of the Society for Psychical Research have complained that mediums will not work for the Society. But in one sense, I have done so for 20 years in the best way possible. I gave sittings to four of the Society's presidents and also almost continuously to E.B.G. Being a member of the SPR she employed the thorough and exhaustive methods of investigation for which this Society is renowned. But, in one respect, she went further than any other representative of it, as she kept her laboratory specimen (myself) under observation in her house, with the exception of holidays, over a period of 20

years. Only Dr Hodgson came near to equalling this in supervising Mrs Piper's sittings over a period of 15 years.

"... I was bombarded by numbers of people asking me to give them sittings. They offered me money but such work would have prohibited my own unpaid experiments, which seemed to me of more value from the research point of view, to the subject."

Neither is there any mention by Price of the army of famous people, including scientists and researchers, who so widely acclaimed Geraldine's personal "transparent honesty."

Typical examples include: David Gray, United States Ambassador to Eire, 1940-47. Commenting on *The Scripts of Cleophas* he wrote: "Until we met at Drishane House as fellow guests of Edith Somerville, I had never had the opportunity of witnessing the production of automatic writing. It was instantly evident to me that there could be no question either as to the genuineness of the phenomena or your complete good faith. Regardless of the origin of the writing and of the significance of the matter transmitted, the bare fact that over a million words had been produced automatically with a speed beyond normal powers of composition, seemed to me to constitute a supernormal phenomenon of first importance."

Similarly, in a foreword to Geraldine's *Mind in Life and Death*, Raynor C. Johnson M.A. (Oxon), Ph.D., D.Sc. (London), Master of Queen's College, Melbourne University, described her as "a person of wholesome commonsense and complete integrity." He added: "For my own part I am disposed to regard her writing as substantially what it purports to be: a most remarkable record of communication with persons who in the fullness of their powers have survived the change which we call death of the body."

Price's self-chosen "authority" in the dubious "art" of denigration — Professor Dodds — places himself beyond the pale

when he seeks to belittle Geraldine's heroic, unpaid Second World War role which resulted in helping to safeguard essential food supplies reaching Britain. He also betrays his unreliability as a researcher when he is alleged to have privately told Mrs Willett's sons Alexander and Henry Coombe-Tennant that in regard to Geraldine's widely acclaimed *Swan on a Black Sea*, superbly researched by Signe Toksvig: "there was internal evidence pointing in the direction of conscious or unconscious fraud."

Unfortunately for both denigrators, insuperable evidence to the contrary exists in Geraldine's research archives. It comprises a letter sent to her from Henry Coombe-Tennant himself who received her requested scripts by post.

He told her: "The more I study these scripts the more deeply I am impressed by them." He confirmed that with the exception of one incorrect name, "every other name and reference is accurate and to me very evidential and at times surprising. There was no tapping of my mind because much appears that I never knew."

Price himself writes his own epitaph as a researcher when he chooses to dismiss Geraldine's biographical account of *The Fate of Colonel Fawcett* in two denigratory paragraphs followed by the comment:

"All this should be sufficient to show that there is a strong case against the Scripts of Cleophas and against the Cummins automatic writings in general."

He conveniently omits to tell the innocent reader that prior to publication Geraldine, in her characteristic scrupulous fashion, had submitted her typescript to Colonel Fawcett's brother, Douglas Fawcett, an eminent philosopher.

He not only approved the manuscript as worthy of publication but "advised me either to submit the book to a newspaper for serialisation or to have it published in book form. I have, in fact, his permission to state that he has no objection whatever to the publication of *The Fate of Colonel Fawcett*."

The Egryn Lights

Kevin McClure turns back the pages of history to re-examine an extraordinary British mystery: a little-known religious phenomenon, centred on one woman, which seems to have combined psychic and UFO elements.

THREE QUARTERS of a century ago, Wales was in the grip of a great religious revival, accompanied by extraordinary paranormal phenomena. Some 60,000 converts were made, many of them in the mining valleys of the South, and in the districts where the fervour waxed strongest there had been marked change in personal and social behaviour.

Drunkenness, public entertainment, and rugby football became widely

unacceptable. *The Times* (3.1.1905) reports the complaints of a publican whose takings had halved in the previous fortnight. Lloyd-George took to substituting Revival meetings for political rallies. Services, mostly conducted by one of a small handful of missionaries, lasted for several hours. Evangelists and converts collapsed with emotion; young people played an unprecedented part in the work.

It is perhaps not surprising that in this

highly charged situation there should appear elements of the paranormal. From the start Evan Roberts, the most successful and famous of the Revivalists, claimed divine guidance and visionary experience, the respectability of which caused long arguments in the pages of the *Western Mail*.

Yet, though the Revival came late to North Wales, and the converts there accounted for only some 10,000 of the

100,000 eventually estimated, it was the evangelist of the little chapel of Egryn, on the main road between Barmouth and Harlech, on whom centred the most remarkable reported events of the Revival. If true, they constitute one of the outstanding British mysteries.

The contemporary religious literature hardly mentions Mary Jones. There are several books which deal at great length with Evan Roberts and the other evangelists, yet she is acknowledged only for the 51 conversions she effected in a fortnight in the sparsely populated district of Llanegryn. Even the one recent work on the Revival takes the same attitude. The result of this apparent avoidance of the murky depths of the occult is that our sources for research are limited. National and local newspapers, supplemented by lengthy reports in the Society for Psychical Research *Proceedings* and in A. P. Sinnett's *Occult Review*, constitute almost all we have. Field work has produced little new information.

The wife of a farmer, Mary Jones lived in the bleak farmhouse at Islawrfford on the coastal plain near the railway halt of Tal-y-bont. The sister of the superintendent of the tiny chapel at Egryn, her early life had been traumatic. Orphaned at an early age, her older sister had cared for her. Four years after the death of her own son her sister died, too, and she apparently lost her lifelong faith in God. Around the time of the first inklings of Revival in S. Wales she had undergone a dramatic, though solitary, conversion experience and had returned to regular attendance at the Egryn Chapel.

Early in December 1904 she prayed long and earnestly to be allowed to become "the accepted medium for spreading the Spirit of the Revival throughout Merionethshire." The Saviour appeared to her in bodily form and told her "that the work was reserved for another." However her friend, to whom the work was to be entrusted, declined the responsibility, and Mrs Jones commenced her missionary work. Of this period we have no objective reports, only what Mrs Jones told a Caernarvon journalist, Beriah G. Evans.

"The first night's mission", he reported, "was marked by the appearance for the first time of Mrs Jones' 'star' and 'lights'. The star was heralded by a luminous arch, of the character of the 'Aurora Borealis', one end resting on the sea, the other on the hill-top (a distance of well over a mile) bathing the little chapel in a flood of soft effulgence. The star soon after appeared, its light flooding the chapel itself. The star has seemed to rest above particular houses, whose roofs are thrown out in bold relief amidst the surrounding darkness. When this occurs in the Egryn district a convert or converts invariably turn up at the next meeting from that particular house . . . It glows placidly on the roof of the chapel where her service is held, and when it does so the spiritual character of the meeting is very marked."

There are some additional, anonymous reports of this period in the SPR

Proceedings, but whatever the truth may be, by the middle of January 1905 the manifestations were well known.

The *Cambrian News* of 13.1.05 reported:

"Her claims to have had spiritual visions have, possibly, appeared as a vague thing to sceptical minds, but now her declarations are being confirmed in a strange manner. She had on several occasions called attention to a strange light which she says is frequently seen in the district. This has been regarded as one of her own inspiring thoughts, until the light was seen by other people, who are not apt to be led by wild imaginations. On Thursday night of last week, Mrs Jones attended a meeting at Pensarn, where hundreds of people congregated. The Chapel can be seen from the Railway, and as a train, driven by a Machynlleth man, was passing, a strange light was seen shooting out of ten different directions, and then coming together with a loud clap. 'Never do I wish to see anything like it again,' said the driver in relating his experience. Both he and his mate saw the light which, since then, has been seen by other people, but in a different form. A strange light was also seen near Towyn."

During the course of February 1905 the national press made a real nine-day wonder of Mary Jones. Beriah Evans must bear much of the responsibility with an article, published in the *Barmouth Advertiser*, the *Guardian*, the *Daily News* and the *Occult Review*, that described at length the experiences of himself, Mary Jones, and three others on a walk from her home to the Egryn Chapel. He describes the light as appearing and disappearing, moving, hovering, and apparently travelling miles in a matter of seconds. It is a dramatic report, though somewhat weakened by his admission that parts of the experience were clearly subjective, and it had a dramatic effect. The *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror* and *Manchester Guardian* all sent correspondents; two of them had remarkable experiences. The *Daily Mail* (13.2.1905) reporter described the events of the evening of February 11 after meeting Mary Jones:

"In the distance, about a mile away, I could see the three lighted windows of the tiny Egryn Chapel where service was being held. It was the only touch of light in the miles of countryside. Suddenly, at 8.20 pm I saw what appeared to be a ball of fire above the roof of the chapel. It came from nowhere, and sprang into existence instantaneously. It had a steady, intense yellow brilliance, and did not move. I called to a man 100 yards down the road. He came running to me excitedly, and said 'Yes, yes above the chapel. The great light.' We watched the light together. It seemed to me to be at twice the height of the chapel, say 50 feet, and it stood out with electric vividness against the encircling hills behind. Suddenly it disappeared, having lasted about a minute and a half . . .

"The minutes crept by — then two lights flashed out, one on each side of the chapel.

They seemed about 100 yards apart, and higher in the air than the first one . . . I made a rough guess that they were about 100 feet above the roof of the chapel. They shone out brilliantly and steadily for a space of 30 seconds. Then they both began to flicker like a defective arc-lamp. They were flickering like that while one could count ten. Then they became steady again. In the distance they looked like large and brilliant motor car lights. That is, baldly, what I saw."

The *Daily Mirror* correspondent had two, possibly stranger, experiences:

"For several hours I had been watching with the *Daily Mirror* photographer near the little Egryn Chapel. Then at 10 o'clock, about 400 yards away I saw the light. When I went in its direction, and was about 100 yards from the chapel, it took the form of a bar of light quite four feet wide, and of the most brilliant blue. It blazed out at me from the roadway, a few yards from the Chapel. For half a moment it lay across the road, and then extended itself up the wall on either side. It did not rise above the walls. As I stared, fascinated, a kind of quivering radiance flashed with lightning speed from one end of the bar to the other, and the whole thing disappeared."

Yet again, not all those present witnessed the phenomenon.

No such qualification is made to the second, UFO-like incident, which occurred while the reporter was travelling back with Mrs Jones from a meeting.

"For three miles we drove in silence, and I had given up hope. It was close on midnight, and we were nearing Barmouth when suddenly, without the faintest warning, a soft shimmering radiance flooded the road at our feet. Immediately it spread around us, and every stick and stone within twenty yards was visible. It seemed as though some large body between earth and sky had suddenly opened and emitted a flood of light from within itself. It was a little suggestive of the bursting of a firework bomb — and yet wonderfully different. Quickly as I looked up, the light was even then fading from the sky overhead. I seemed to see an oval mass of grey, half open, disclosing within a kernel of white light. As I looked it closed, and everything was once again in darkness."

These accounts are representative, but only briefly so. There are also reports of the lights travelling across the sea to be present at her meetings on the Llyn Peninsula, and of the lights being with her at Harlech, Bont-ddu, and Wrexham. The *Barmouth Advertiser* (27.4.1905) describes at length the hill-top observations of three clergymen from the Llangollen area who saw a series of lights travelling, rising, falling and exploding.

There are many accounts of static and recurrent fireballs, often lasting several minutes. Between all these there is a marked consistency, which adds greatly to the credibility of the events. Certainly there are more extraordinary reports, such as Mary Jones's claimed experience with a man clad in black who turns into a black dog, and the appearance of an airborne

Christ to a convert. These are perhaps less important; certainly they should not be allowed to detract from the core of fully reported, responsibility witnessed encounters.

It should be stressed that even in 1905 many local people in Egryn and around neither witnessed, nor gave credence to Mary Jones's Lights, much as they respected her evangelism. A multitude of possible explanations have been suggested for what, clearly, was seen: Venus, St. Elmo's Fire, marsh gas, phosphuretted hydrogen, phosphorescence, ball lightning and the sun glinting on glass, are the physical explanations, some of which may in part be relevant. The psychological explanations — religious hysteria, mass delusion, some form of hypnosis, are more likely to be relevant. Certainly there are a number of selective experiences, where lights are witnessed by only a few members

of a group and, for whatever reason, contact with Mary Jones clearly made any individual more likely to perceive the phenomena in which she believed.

In his report the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent concluded: "Taking the existence of the Lights to be admitted — and there seems to be abundant evidence — it may be hoped that some competent enquiry will be directed as to their source."

Sadly, no such enquiry ever took place. The SPR investigation was effected by postal questionnaire; the *Daily Mail* sent the son of a well-known scientist who attempted the measurement of electrical emissions. The *Daily News* found a scientist who knew so much about Welsh fireflies that he never even went to Wales; and though Beriah Evans produced a written enquiry in his *Occult Review* articles, he was so involved in the reporting of the Revival that I cannot accept him as

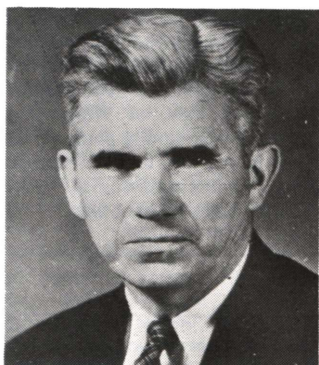
unbiased. If only someone had tried harder.

If there were objective manifestations, and I tend to accept that there were, then I do not think we need look as far as divine intervention. The emotional and psychologically complex Mary Jones desperately wanted to play a major part in the Revival, and the phenomenon of the lights made that possible where mere evangelism could not.

Her past, present and personal situation, added to the atmosphere of the Revival, leave us pondering over the boundaries between religion, magic, psychism and hallucination, and over the ability of an individual to produce tangible effects through mental processes.

This article is based on Stars and rumours of stars by Kevin and Sue McClure (£1 or \$3, P & P included) from 8 Scotland Road, Little Bowden, Market Harborough, Leics.

PARAPSYCHOLOGY



Dr J. B. Rhine

THE MAN who was responsible for putting extra-sensory perception on a scientific footing — Dr Joseph Banks Rhine — died on February 20 at Durham, North Carolina, aged 84.

Most of today's parapsychologists will readily admit that Rhine's work has been a great influence on their own studies, even though his famous Zener card-guessing experiments are now out of fashion.

Rhine's interest in psychic perception came about through an investigation of mediumship which he conducted with Dr Walter Franklin Prince at Harvard University in 1926 — a year before he went to Duke University which was later to become world-famous as the home of ESP research.

He became an instructor in philosophy and psychology at Duke, and then, in 1929, instructor to professor, psychology — a post he held for 20 years. Rhine was fortunate to have a leading English psychologist, William McDougall, as head of the psychology department at the university. Professor McDougall, who had been president of both the British and the American Society for Psychical Research, encouraged Rhine to start the parapsychology laboratory at Duke.

Despite the evidential findings of his early ESP studies, Rhine encountered opposition — as he did throughout his life — and was forced to open a separate parapsychology lab, outside the university, and seek independent sponsorship. This was forthcoming, particularly from Charles Ozzanne.

Another generous benefactor was Chester F. Carlson, inventor of the photocopying technique known as xerography. Carlson's financial aid was responsible for setting up the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man in 1962, with Dr Rhine as director. This appointment led to ESP pioneer away from Duke to Durham, North Carolina.

Though Rhine's methods and conclusions have often been challenged by scientists who found it hard to believe in ESP or psychokinesis (mind over matter), which later occupied his attention, he was always able to answer his critics convincingly.

But what did decades of ESP work do for Rhine? He was cautious about the implications of parapsychology, but he made this observation in his book *The Reach of the Mind* (1947):

"It is shocking but true that we know the atom today better than we know the mind that knows the atom. If we could arrive at half as good an understanding of the mind as physics has achieved with the elements of matter, we should probably be able to release and utilise guiding principles of inconceivable significance to human life and society."

Tribute to Murphy

RHINE owed much to the influence of a giant of psychical research, Gardner Murphy, who died in March, last year. To do justice to Dr Murphy's

contribution to this field of exploration would take a book, and that is virtually what the American Society for Psychical Research has produced.

The January 1980 issue of the ASPR's *Journal* devotes all 147 pages to tributes to Dr Murphy, who was the society's vice-president from 1940-62, and afterwards president. It includes one from the present president, Dr Montague Ullman, who quotes these words from Gardner's wife about an early encounter with J. B. Rhine:

"That fall of 1926 when Gardner was not well, J. B. Rhine appeared at the door and said he would like to talk to Gardner Murphy. I told him that Gardner was sick. J. B. then explained the purpose of his visit: 'I just want to know one thing — does he really take telepathy seriously? Because I'm considering making a commitment to spend my life at it.' I assured him that Gardner was deeply and permanently committed to psychical research and expected to devote a good part of his time to it."

J. B. Rhine pays his own tribute in the *Journal* revealing that he first met Gardner one night in 1923 when he was investigating a medium. What stands out in his comments and those of the other contributors is that, as well as being a superb investigator, Murphy won the admiration of his colleagues for the respect and humanity he showed to others, even his critics.

Bright new future?

FROM revered pioneers to today's young successors. Just over a week before Rhine's death, three English parapsychologists, Susan Blackmore, Julian Isaacs and Carl Sargent, got together in London,

in front of a Society for Psychical Research audience, to discuss "Future Prospects for Parapsychologists".

Susan Blackmore has recently completed a PhD at Surrey University, Guildford, on parapsychology and memory; Julian Isaacs is working at Birmingham University on psychokinesis, particularly using strain gauge detectors; and Carl Sargent has also completed a PhD, at Cambridge University, and his work with ESP and ganzfeld was featured in *Alpha* No. 6.

Each took a different approach to the subject and it resulted in a very lively debate. Sargent, commenting on the difficulties facing young people with a desire to take up parapsychology, had referred to lack of funds from official bodies. Blackmore reminded him, however, that she had received a Research Council grant, believed to be the first it had given for psychic study, but added: "I hope it wasn't because they knew I'd got negative results."

Indeed, Sue Blackmore's ability to produce chance-only results in ESP tests, while all around her seem to be getting impressive positive results, is something of a phenomenon in itself. She admits that she would like to be getting strong evidence for ESP, too, but she has to take note of her own findings, though she is the first to point out that they are not proof that ESP does *not* exist.

However, it has led her to put forward a challenging proposition. She argued that parapsychology is failing to provide the positive results that are needed (a point strongly challenged by Sargent in the ensuing debate) and asked how long are we going to wait before we have them — 10, 50 or 100 years? And should we get to the point where we say, once and for all, that extra-sensory perception does

not exist?

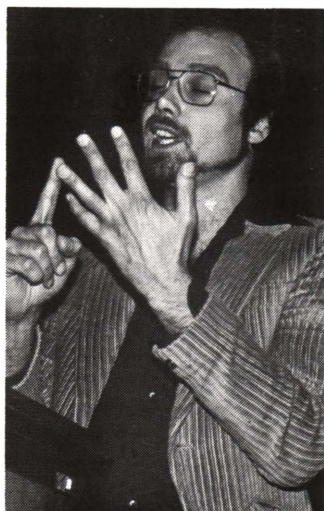
"What if we didn't any longer believe in ESP?" she asked. We may not have parapsychology, but we would still have psychical research, and important questions such as "Do we survive physical death?" could be re-examined without being bugged by the super-ESP hypothesis which is currently used to explain almost any psychic phenomenon . . . but which in fact is no explanation at all.

"So," she concluded, "without ESP, we might actually have a great future."

Julian Isaacs was similarly outspoken. "I think the 80s is going to be the decade when psi gets accepted as officially real and existent. If by 1990 that hasn't happened, I will be a very surprised man, and I will even be prepared to pay money for bets and silly things like that."

Isaacs' particular interest is psychokinesis (PK) for which he has developed a detector which gives an audible or visual indication. His view is that physicists are much more open to belief in psi effects than psychologists and he expects to see a gradual spreading of research into PK "because it's largely amenable to normal laboratory means of measurement."

He also believes that PK is going to shed a great deal of light on



Julian Isaacs

other problems that confront us in parapsychology, including the relationship between body and mind, which in turn is intimately involved in the question of whether we survive death.

Speaking from a point of special advantage, as a council member of the Society for Psychical Research, Isaacs spoke enthusiastically about a renaissance of amateur research that is occurring under the SPR's auspices.

Finally, he produced his "joker" in the pack: the

suggestion that the best way to convert sceptics is for them to experience psychic phenomena themselves, and this could come about through the application of PK effects to control systems. In other words, sceptics would themselves generate PK, because, it seems, a good proportion of the population do just that, in small amounts, and that these bursts of energy would be detected by sensitive equipment which, in turn, would trigger a device.

Needless to say, Isaacs is hoping to develop such an instrument, and his own strain gauge apparatus, to detect small metal-bending effects, is clearly a fore-runner of something more sophisticated.

We have certainly come a long way since Rhine's early efforts to trap extra-sensory perception in the laboratory. But whether we really understand much more about it is still subject to debate.

Award winners

A PSYCHIATRIST and a psychologist are the recipients of the first Southern California Society for Psychical Research's Distinguished Achievement Awards. They are Dr Raymond Moody, best-selling author of *Life After Death*, and Dr Karlis Osis, the leading American parapsychologist whose research projects have included large-scale

studies of ESP, out-of-body experiences, and death-bed visions.

The awards were presented at Hollywood's Brown Derby restaurant on February 14 by the society's president, Dr Elizabeth McAdams. Dr Moody was unable to be present but the award was accepted on his behalf by the wife of TV star Dick Van Patten.

Aerospace and inner space

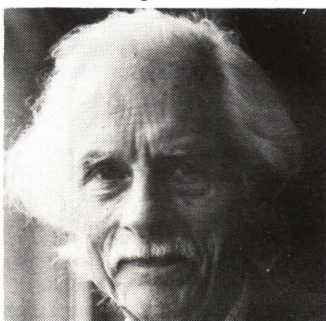
RESEARCHERS often complain about lack of funds in parapsychology but Washington-based physicist Peter Phillips has no cause to do so. He has just received a half-million dollar grant from James S. McDonnell, chairman of the McDonnell Douglas aerospace corporation, whose interest in psychics has been mentioned in these columns before (*Alpha* No. 1).

The American *Fate* magazine (January 1980) quoted this public statement, made by McDonnell, when the award was announced: "The exploration of the deep inner space of humankind can challenge intellectually adventurous men and women for generations to come."

Peter Phillips, of Washington University (St Louis) plans to use the money to continue his research into psychokinesis and spontaneous psi phenomena.

ALPHA FILE

Preparing the way



Prophet of the Aquarian Age, Sir George Trevelyan.

TO MANY people, Sir George Trevelyan, white-haired and charismatic, is the living prophet of the Aquarian Age. Lecturer, writer and founder of the Wrekin Trust, he regularly tours the country to spread the message that a new age, of which the main spring is a spiritual awakening, looms on the horizon. He sees the building of William Blake's New Jerusalem taking place today as more people grasp the "spiritual world view" which, in his book, *A vision of the Aquarian Age*, Sir George describes as "a vision of wholeness, an apprehension of the essential unity of all life."

He is convinced that "in more and more minds today, there is a deepening conviction that the whole is alive and is the work of

Mind, of some Intelligence." If there is, it is no little way due to the Wrekin Trust, an educational charity that mounts courses and lectures which give people a chance to explore the many facets of this new vision of life.

The Wrekin Trust has built up a solid reputation for presenting the foremost thinkers and researchers at its residential and day courses. Some courses have become established as annual events: Holistic Health and Healing, to be held this year on 18 to 20 July, is now in its ninth year. It provides a forum for those interested in the development of medical and health care incorporating natural and unorthodox therapies.

Its courses also provide people with unique opportunities for hearing leading thinkers and researchers from overseas. March's Mystics and Scientists conference included Drs Elmer and Alyce Green, founders of the Menninger Foundation in the United States and biofeedback pioneers. On 19 April, Explorations into the Sacred Realms of Self presents American scientist and mystic John Lilly, author of, among other books, *Centre of the Cyclone*.

The programme for spring and summer includes 16 events, ranging from the Astrology of Personal Growth and a modern approach to mystical Christianity

to practical courses on dowsing and Bruce MacManaway's summer school for healers. Most are day or weekend events costing between £14 and £35. Longer courses, such as Paul Solomon's summer school, the Inner Light of Consciousness Experience, lasting six days, is £109.

It was during the war, after avidly reading Rudolf Steiner, that Sir George was inspired to provide a form of spiritual adult education. As head of Attingham Park, an adult education college, from 1947 to 1971, he was able to introduce his ideas on a small scale. "My superiors looked askance," he recalls. "But allowed it to go ahead because the response was so good." It was during this period that Sir George discovered who was in the field and built up his contacts.

"When I retired in 1971, we had a long waiting list of people for these courses and I didn't want to let people down." The Wrekin Trust was born to carry on the work. "We offered classes on subjects that looked at life as a holistic, non-material process, but not under any one label. We wanted to let people find their own direction, Buddhism or whatever."

Five years ago, Malcolm Lazarus joined the trust. He has helped it to operate on a firmer financial basis. "I had planted the

seed, but I needed someone to help bring it to flower," says Sir George.

His hope is that the courses the Wrekin Trust puts on will be recognised as an integral part of adult education by the authorities and supported as such.

In the meantime, the trust will carry on evolving its own programme. "We've seen many changes since we began. There are far more young people coming along to the conferences today," a trend, he believes, that will continue. As for Sir George, his commitments to the trust are just part of his work load. He lectures extensively to groups and organisations around the U.K. The week we met, his schedule was taking him from Bournemouth to Worthing, the Channel Islands and Manchester. "Personally, for me it's wonderful. It lets me explore England again, almost like a pilgrimage." To judge from the burgeoning work of the Wrekin Trust, there is no shortage of people ready to follow him on the first steps of that greater, inner pilgrimage.

David Harvey

Anyone who wants to receive information on the Wrekin Trust can do so by sending their name and address plus £1 to be put on the mailing list for one year: Wrekin Trust, Dove House, Little Birch, Hereford.

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Reply to Stan Gooch (p. 7)

AS A 'professional psychologist' Mr Gooch should know better than to display his bias by basing his opinion of my work on two or three cases of hear-say. Has he not heard of representative sampling, interviewing techniques to gain information, errors of reporting?

The method of diagnosis using the Kirlian photograph of both hands has been carefully built up over the past five years in this country, Germany, Belgium, U.S.A. The great majority of clients have received help, advice and encouragement based on the objective statement of the balance of their energies as shown in the handprint.

We are not able to give in-depth analysis on the stand but to give basic information about the print, and to open the eyes of the public to the possibility of an 'energy body' which is responsive to states of mind.

Kirlian photography has been used by scientists as a diagnostic tool for a wide variety of physical and mental conditions including cancer, cystic fibrosis, schizophrenia. If Mr Gooch cares to study some of the many thousands of scientific papers on the subject he will find ample confirmation of the validity of this phenomena for diagnosis.

The work of Tiller is ten years old, and was based on the fingertips and not the whole hand. This is a basic error as I have tried to point out in my book *The Unseen Self*.

I am glad to cooperate with any scientist or psychologist to develop this important technique even further.

*Brian Snellgrove,
Kirlian Aura Diagnosis.*

EAST ANGLIA — walking the ley lines and ancient tracks
Shirley Toulson. Illustrated by Oliver Caldecott. Maps by Sue Lawes

Wildwood House 1979. £6.95

AS WITH an earlier book she wrote on the drover's roads of Wales, Toulson here actually gets out and about walking the ancient tracks and roads of, in this instance, the East Anglian landscape. She writes entertainingly and provides necessary "in the field" information. She tells of ancient churches, of prehistoric sites, of roads of Roman times and earlier, of the mysterious Suffolk "Grundles" (a particularly interesting inclusion), of the "Puddingstone Track" (now disproved in a recent issue of the Cambridge-based *Journal of Geomancy*), and of many features of an ancient landscape in danger of slipping out of contemporary awareness. In addition, Toulson has been particularly effective in giving a folklore commentary on many of the places visited in the book.

Although the author's writing is good in itself, she makes a poor job of organising her material. There are so many sections, sub-sections, parts A, B and C's that at times I didn't know whether I was supposed to be coming or going east, west or whichways! The text is further scrambled by the liberal sprinkling of Caldecott's drawings. He has a knack for depicting foliage with a few swift strokes, and some pictures come off successfully. But most of the illustrations amount to pretty poor stuff, with crude lines disfiguring the subject matter. Sue Lawes' maps are appealing but the inclusion of a scale bar with each really would have increased their usefulness no end.

Unfortunately, the book also makes a major claim to be a guide to the "ley lines" of the region: in this respect, the book's subtitle is misleading.

Toulson knows a fair amount about old tracks but precious little about leys and other geomantic matters. The rushed "swotting up" she has done shows in the misnaming of pertinent book titles and the paraphrasing of partially obsolete passages from material written a decade and more ago, without correction or updating.

On the first page she repeats a number of misconceptions, including the statement that Watkins coined the phrase "ley lines". He did not — he used the word "ley", the other phrase being an ingrained, modern misnomer.

Toulson doesn't work in ley or geomantic research: she has simply dived around picking up snippets from the work of real researchers.

I'm damned if I can readily detect a single worthwhile ley in the whole book — though there may be a few wallowing in the mish-mash of the text. At any event, the author treats leys somewhat loosely in her meanders around East Anglia. Neither the text nor the maps in this book act as a guide to East Anglian leys — be warned.

But it is the publishers who really deserve caning. We are told that this book is the first of a trilogy of regional guides. Heaven help us, the Peak District is the next area in the sights of Wildwood House — and already, in a northern Earth Mysteries newsletter, I have noted a plaintive request from one Shirley Toulson appealing for ley information relating to the Peak. On what grounds can Wildwood justify publishing a series of ley books by a journalist when in almost every region of Britain at the present time there are skilful *primary* researchers who can do the job properly as well as write up their work competently?

We are experiencing a boom in talent and publishers should be fostering the growth of geomantic research — a vital new awareness native to Britain that is beginning to have a world-wide effect. This Wildwood series would have provided an excellent vehicle for such support.

As it is, we are getting the work of serious researchers, hard-won and unpaid, being inadequately processed by an uncommitted, professional writer. It is so very typical of Britain to let down its front line researchers in almost any field, letting the real work wither from lack of direct support.

If Wildwood House wishes to avoid the charge of cynicism with regard to real geomantic research in this country, it should drop the word "ley" from the covers of the remaining books to be produced in this series.

Paul Devereux.

THE HILL OF THE DRAGON

Paul Newman

Kingsmead Press £5.95

"THE MARVELLOUS thing about symbols are their timelessness and their adaptability" declares, with shaky grammar but disarming candour, the author of this fact-packed overview of dragon-lore. That, alas, is the trouble about dragons. The wealth they are so often set to guard is nothing compared with the wealth of symbolism they themselves contain: as Mr Newman shows, dragons not only come in every shape and size, but can also stand for good or evil, personify male or female forces, life or death, creation or destruction, according to the

cultural context in which they find themselves. And they find themselves in virtually every culture, all-purpose beasts of burden forced to carry whatever mythological merchandise the natives require.

I dare say that when Mr Newman set out his dragon quest he hoped to return with the myth firmly impaled on his ballpoint, his quarry firmly labelled as the archetypal this or that. But in the course of his hunt he has come across such a confusion of dragon-data that in the end he has to admit defeat; adapting itself to its environment, reflecting back at us whatever we try to read into it, the dragon goes galumphing back into its secret lair.

But in the end it's the dragon who loses. The trouble with a myth that can mean anything is that it ultimately means nothing. Perhaps that's why none of us take the poor old dragon seriously any more, but send our kids to see him at the cinema, no longer dignified but Disneyfied.

Hilary Evans

MAPS OF THE ANCIENT SEA KINGS

Charles H. Hapgood

Turnstone £7.95

WHEN CHARLES Hapgood's book was first published back in 1966, it created an immediate flurry of interest which has not subsided to this day. This new and revised edition is thus particularly welcome, giving us a second chance to evaluate this fascinatingly complex mystery which, like a cunningly contrived detective story, requires us to have all our wits about us as we follow the sleuth through his labyrinth of clues.

A good many of those clues have to be taken on trust by those of us who are neither cartographic experts nor trained historians. But even the layman can recognise that here is a case that deserves to be taken very seriously: for this we have not only Hapgood's word but also that of several expert witnesses, plus the fact that in fourteen years, though his suggestions have been often questioned, they have not been effectively refuted.

To conventional science his suggestions are, of course, outrageous. He claims that we have documentary evidence for the existence of ancient cultures possessing a greater knowledge of the world's geography than any historic civilisation up to the eighteenth century. To acquire that knowledge, he reasonably argues, implies the possession of a sophisticated technology far surpassing that of any known ancient culture. In other words

here is strong evidence for the existence of one of those 'lost' civilisations about which we have seen so much speculation, some sane but mostly irresponsible, during the last few decades.

Whether we go along with Hapgood and premise a globally trading if not globally governing superpower, or whether we adopt some alternative hypothesis, doesn't affect the nature of the evidence itself. Many of us are familiar with Piri Re's Map which appears to show an unfrozen Antarctic continent (lucidly discussed in such books as Francis Hitching's *World Atlas of Mysteries*); but there is a good deal more to Professor Hapgood's case, and he presents it clearly and as far as possible in non-technical language in this generously illustrated and thoroughly documented book.

It is refreshing to have so intricate a subject so lucidly presented. Hapgood achieves an easy-going style without oversimplifying or patronising, carrying us along with him, step by persuasive step, towards his logical conclusion.

For the historian, for the scientist, for all who seek answers to the questions presented by the so imperfectly known history of our race, this book is important and exciting reading, solidly founded in fact yet not afraid to draw the most dramatic inferences. Turnstone are to be congratulated on making it once more available, for his is not just a book to take briefly out of the library, but one to own and study at leisure.

Hilary Evans

You don't know John Cain?

Pat Sykes

Van Duren, £5.50

PAT SYKES has done a useful job in uncovering the experience of 33 individuals who have been helped by John Cain, the Liverpool healer, profiled in this issue. As far as it was possible, she has pursued her investigations to their proper conclusion and ends up with a tapestry of evidence which, although loosely woven, presents an impressive picture of Cain's healing.

Where Pat Sykes does get out of her depth is in her attempt to set Cain in a national context. Yes, there are some dubious healers. There are also many others who have, like Cain, produced remarkable results. Her investigative nose seems to have led her to the dubious sector. The picture she paints of the national scene is not a true reflection. Significantly, it is generalised and has none of the bite of the first-hand, personal account of Cain's work.

David Harvey.

Old Tricks

WE SEE that Randi, the magician, is up to his old tricks again (Letters, *Alpha* No. 6, p. 31). We were not surprised to see Randi upset by *Alpha's* reference to a *Fate* magazine article in which *Fate* editor Curtis Fuller called Randi's bluff. In that article Fuller documents in detail Randi's renege on a \$1000 challenge to us to prove our rebuttal points true, points which can easily be verified by any *Alpha* reader by requesting from us a reprint of the rebuttal and checking for himself.

Although our agnosticism on metal bending is well known and well published, Randi, in defending his renege in the letter to *Alpha*, begins with "And in a letter to *Scientific American* magazine, when submitting that infamous paper that was eventually accepted by *Nature* (after some changes had been made) T & P signed a statement that said in no uncertain terms that Geller could do the claimed metal-bending miracles under 'carefully-verified' and 'well-documented' conditions." That is a pretty unambiguous statement by Randi. The only part that is true, however, is that we wrote a letter to *Scientific American* magazine, (to suggest a review article). The letter had nothing to do with the *Nature* paper (that experimentation was not even to be conceived of for several months), and there was no mention of metal bending by Geller or anyone else.

We understand that the title of Randi's new book is to be *Flim-Flam*. We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

H. E. Puthoff, Ph.D.,
SRI International, California.

Not my headline

A FEW points about the material relating to our ganzfeld work (*Alpha*, No. 6).

First — that headline: "ESP — Proof Positive." Readers should know that I had nothing to do with that. Proof belongs to mathematics. The data provide strong evidence but that's a different thing.

Second — I don't think all experimental psychology is rubbish. I certainly said that abnormal and development psychology were, in my view, interesting and important. Having said that, I do think that large areas of psychology are arid, sterile, and have produced little of any value.

Finally, it is true that I like to take lines of experimentation and improve on them, but the aim is not to do experiments better than other people and crow about it. Indeed, the point is not "I did it

better than X, Y and Z, and I'm wonderful" but rather "If I can't improve somewhere on the experiments of X, Y, and Z, with the benefit of hindsight, there's something wrong with me."

One must also distinguish between sloppy experiments in parapsychology (e.g. possibility of sensory cues) and experiments where a psi effect is clearly demonstrated but the interpretation is not clear. Hence our use of personality inventories in ganzfeld work. We know now that the procedure works not simply because the people who volunteer to do it are odd in some way — they're a good cross-section of the student population. It must be something about the procedure, not the people who do it, which elicits significant psi effects.

Room for these sorts of improvements is always present because any experimenter cannot cover all the angles. I'm waiting for someone else to improve on our experimental designs, and when that happens (and the sooner the better) I shall be delighted.

The Hugh Ashton hit cited isn't, by the way, unique. Recently, a subject named the actual target picture employed in a session: Blake's "The Ancient of Days."

Best wishes to *Alpha*.
Carl Sargent, Ph.D., The
Psychological Laboratory,
University of Cambridge.

Matthew Manning's experimenters

IN THE ARTICLE "Why experimenters upset results" in your November/December issue, Matthew Manning refers to an experiment I set up and conducted with him in London as part of an investigation under the auspices of the Society for Physical Research organised by Anita Gregory. The experiment was designed to see whether Matthew could by psychic influence reduce the extent of haemolysis of a small amount of blood introduced into dilute saline. Matthew had carried out the experiment six months previously in Texas with Dr. William Braud¹ who claims that his results were positive and statistically highly significant. Matthew was keen to try the experiment again, and it was at his request that I set it up in London.

In comparing the 'successful' Texas and the 'unsuccessful' London experiments Matthew states: "The circumstances of the test were the same; the only difference was the experimenter". This is completely false, as Matthew was perfectly aware. The experiments differed patently in many respects and decisively in

scientific technique, in design and in specificity:

(1) I followed the standard procedure² employed by professional haematologists, which involved centrifuging to remove the remaining red blood cells, and used a modern automatically recording spectrophotometer to measure the extent of haemolysis. Dr Braud did not follow the standard procedure, and used a simple student-type instrument whose dial had to be read by eye while the pointer was moving. He was in fact unable to measure the initial concentration of the blood cell suspension before haemolysis began, and used light of the worst possible wave length for detecting any change. He did not buffer his saline to constant pH, although the textbooks² state this to be essential, and did not measure the volume of blood accurately but simply added "three drops".

(2) I used double-blind design so that when determining the extent of haemolysis later I did not know whether a given tube was from a trial or a control run. On the other hand Dr. Braud knew which was which while he was making the necessary visual dial readings (with the exception of ten out of the hundred runs).

(3) In my experiment the measurements were made in a separate laboratory after the haemolysis tubes had been exposed to Matthew's influence, and only on the most far-fetched hypothesis (which would rule out scientific investigation) could the measurements have been affected by him. In Dr. Braud's experiment both operations took place simultaneously and it was impossible in principle to distinguish between Matthew affecting the measuring instrument paranormally and influencing the blood cells.

With regard to the experimenter effect, the person who actually 'conducted' the experiment could be said to be Anita Gregory: she drew the cards and announced whether it was to be a trial or a control run; she started the runs, timed them by stopwatch and stopped them; she was present and sat near Matthew throughout all the trials (which I was not); she carried out the double-blind labelling of the tubes at the end. Mutatis mutandis, I played a considerable role along with others in the instrument experiment set up by Anita Gregory in which Matthew was highly successful: indeed, my voice is on tape urging Matthew to further paranormal feats which he went on to achieve (also on record).

By ignoring the great differences

in precision, procedure and specifically between the Texas and London experiments, and attempting to lay the blame for the absence of positive results on myself as "experimenter" (though as I have pointed out there was actually two experimenters involved) Matthew is behaving in a frivolous manner which contributes nothing to establishing whether or not he can influence the haemolysis of blood cells or to knowledge of the experimenter effect. His article is also misleading regarding J. Jungerman, who is presented as another experimenter responsible for Matthew's lack of success, in spite of the fact that Matthew carried out some successful random number tests with him³ which Matthew seems to have forgotten.

Ironically, Matthew ends with a plea for the experimenter to conduct his research as a "partner" of the psychic Subject. This suggests that he should be in some sense a sympathetic fellow psychic. Such a relationship might well be conducive to the appearance of paranormal phenomena, but the object of psychical research is not to produce phenomena at all costs and under any conditions. The first object is to capture the phenomena, preferably on automatically recording scientific instruments, under adequately witnessed and controlled conditions which preclude the possibility of normal causation beyond all reasonable doubt. For investigations with this object in view the independence and objectivity of the experimenter in charge is vital.

The experimenter of all people must *not* be psychic; or if he is, he must practice the most rigorous mental hygiene to ensure that he is fully conscious during the experiment and does not slip into a participating altered state in which his control and his critical faculties may be impaired. The tragic case of Dr Soal may well be a salutary example of what can happen when the experimenter is also 'psychic'.

I am particularly interested in the physical phenomena and I believe in a mutual partnership of experimenter and psychic of a different kind, namely that involved in working together to establish their objective existence once and for all. Until this is achieved and accepted by the scientific establishment there is no hope of the field developing on a secure basis and attracting the funding, the prestige and the talent it deserves. In such a partnership the experimenter and the psychic will try and adapt to the necessities of each other's calling in a spirit of

LETTERS

collaboration and in common recognition of the over-riding importance of the goal.

References

- 1 *Experiments with Matthew Manning*, W. Braud, G. Davis and R. Wood to be published in the Journal for the Society for Psychical Research.
- 2 *Practical Haematology*, Dacie and Lewis, 5th edition, J. & A. Churchill Ltd., 1975.
- 3 *PK test with a talented subject on pre-recorded targets*, J. Jungerman, R. Jungerman and M. Manning, unpublished manuscript, University of California at Davis, 1978.

Professor W. Byers Brown

✉

THERE ARE one or two points in Professor William Byers-Brown's reply to my article which I would like to answer. First of all, it was in no way my intention to attempt "to lay the blame for the absence of positive results" on either himself or any other researcher. Blame does not enter into it.

I admit that I was in error in stating that the circumstances of the London and Texas haemolysis tests were the same, but I still do not believe that different procedures during the experiments made any difference to my performance. After all, the ultimate goal was the same: to attempt to psychically reduce the rate of haemolysis of blood. The method of measurement of any reduction should not, I believe, have so considerably affected my ability to succeed during the London trials. In that respect, as the subject, the test was the same. I believe that if I have been successful once, especially to the degree of success obtained with Dr William Braud, I should be able to obtain significant results a second time — regardless of the measuring procedure of the test.

Professor Byers Brown also suggests that I could have paranormally influenced the spectrophotometer rather than the actual blood cells during the Texas experiment. Ironically, I achieved the most significant results during the ten blind trials when I was not close to the spectrophotometer but in another room! It seems far-fetched, to use Professor Byers Brown's description, to assume that I was influencing the machine during those trials.

Professor Byers Brown claims, too, that I was misleading with my reference to Professor John Hungerman because he had carried out some "successful random number tests" with me. As I understand the report of that particular test, the results

demonstrated a strong decline effect. Certainly the initial results were significant ($p = 4.6 \times 10^{-4}$ or 1 in 2, 172); but by the end of the whole series the decline effect had eroded the significance of the results ($p = 7.2 \times 10^{-2}$ or 1 in 12). For this reason I considered the experiment to have been ultimately unsuccessful.

However, the greatest misunderstanding seems to be Professor Byers Brown's interpretation of my call for researchers to act as a partner rather than an Inquisitor. I was not suggesting that the experimenter should become "a sympathetic fellow psychic". In my experience there are a few researchers who treat psychic subjects as laboratory animals; one has the uncomfortable feeling of being scrutinised and judged and in such an atmosphere results are usually sparse.

Charles Honorton of the Maimonides Hospital in New York carried out an interesting experiment along these lines. He engaged a group of subjects in a psychic task and watched over them whilst wearing a white laboratory coat and behaving in a cool and detached stereo-typed "scientific" manner. These subjects showed non-significant psi scoring. Working with a second group of subjects engaged in the same task he removed the white coat and behaved in a warm, friendly and effusive manner towards the subjects whose results were then significant. This is a good example of the experimenter effect. When the experimenter takes on the role of inquisitor, results are non-significant. As soon as he becomes a "partner", the results change considerably.

Funnily enough, there is a standing joke between Professor Byers Brown and me about white laboratory coats. During the successful instrument experiment set up by Anita Gregory he was not wearing his white coat, I believe. During some of the haemolysis trials he wore this garment for practical reasons. Maybe there is a moral there! I look forward to working with Professor Byers Brown again, despite our occasional differences of opinion. *Matthew Manning, Linton, Cambridgeshire*

*The correct references to WBB's article are:

1. Experiments with Matthew Manning, W. Braud, G. Davis and R. Wood, Journal for the Society of Psychical Research, December, 1979.
2. (OK)
3. A Month With Matthew Manning: Experiences and Experiments in Northern

California during May-June 1977, Ed. Jeffrey Mishlove, Washington Research Center, 3101, Washington Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94115.

Surprise discovery

CONGRATULATIONS on your new magazine.

It came as a most pleasant surprise to discover, with issue 4, a magazine which treated the paranormal intelligently and with discrimination rather than reporting it sensationally, as is usually the case with other periodicals geared towards metaphysics or the occult.

I look forward to future issues, and wish you every success for prolonged publication.

Agnes Meadows, London

Radio contact

SINCE I heard you on Radio London at the launch of your magazine *Alpha*, I've bought it and found it very interesting and informative.

However, in the October issue I note that you made an error concerning Mother Shipton. Her verse should in fact have read:

"The world then to an end shall come

In Nineteen Hundred and Ninety One."

This is according to my reference issued by the book, *The Life and Prophecies of Ursula Sontheil*, better known as Mother Shipton.

So we've still got ten years more to live.

A. D. Davidge, London

Binder request

WOULD YOU consider the possibility of publishing binders to contain one's copies of ALPHA? *Peter Newby, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.*

Ed. Yes — we will make an announcement in the next issue.

Rigorous and professional

MANY THANKS and congratulations on a publication that is scientifically rigorous, journalistically professional and thoroughly entertaining.

Dr Harry Yoxall, Towcester, Northants

Borley tapes

MAY I comment on the letter in your correspondence columns headed 'Borley Ghost'. To put the record straight Andrew Green had nothing to do with the television programme he refers to as far as

the Borley haunting was concerned. Hugh Burnett, the producer of the television documentary, 'The Ghost Hunters', made in 1975, had been told that the noises on the tape were of a paranormal origin and that there was nothing inside the church that could have caused them. In the programme I took Burnett round Borley Church and pointed out various items that *could* have made all the noises that are reproduced on the tape. I quite agree that the paranormality of the sounds has not been 'fully authenticated', nor 'investigated by the BBC' or anyone else; indeed since when has the BBC undertaken the investigation of psychic phenomena?

The noises and sounds apparently recorded at Bircham Newton were first broadcast by Jack de Manio who then invited me to appear on his programme and comment on them. In doing so I had to say that without knowing a great deal more about the circumstances under which the recordings were made and some independent authentication of the witnesses concerned, I could hardly be expected to pronounce them genuine — with my many years experience of the world and the ways of men.

Returning to Borley, I have read with interest your comments headed 'Borley Revisited' concerning the SPR article that seeks to rehabilitate Marianne Foyster but I feel that you might have been wise to await publication of my reply to that article, due for publication in the next SPR Journal, when I think you might have found grounds for doubting much of what is now attributed to the redoubtable Marianne. And of course Marianne Foyster was suspected of 'helping out' at Borley long before 1956 — as early as 1931 the enigmatic Harry Price came to the conclusion that she was responsible for much of the 'phenomena' at one period and he published his conclusions in the 1930s.

Peter Underwood, President, The Ghost Club

We should like to thank all those readers who have written to Alpha.

The editors reserve the right to cut or edit letters unless readers specify that their correspondence must be published in full, or not at all.

Unfortunately, we are unable to send a personal acknowledgement to each correspondent. But every letter is read and its contents noted.

Those readers who do want a reply are asked to send a stamped, addressed envelope.

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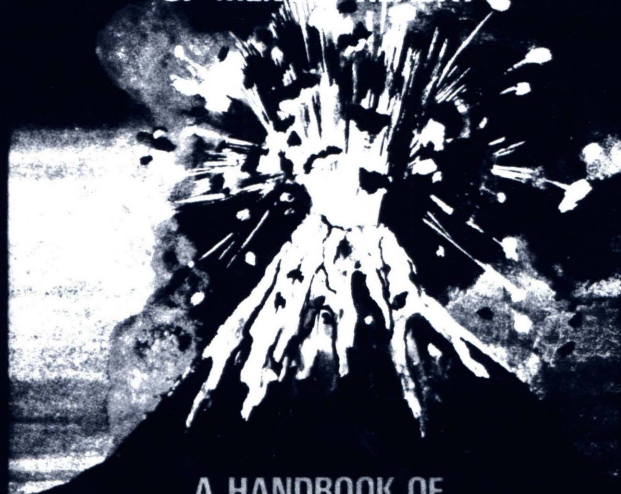
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